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September 2015

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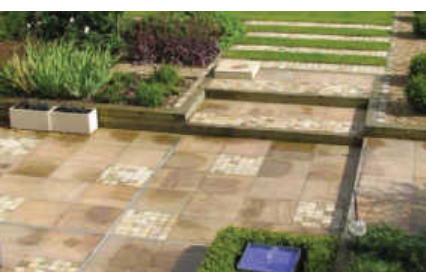
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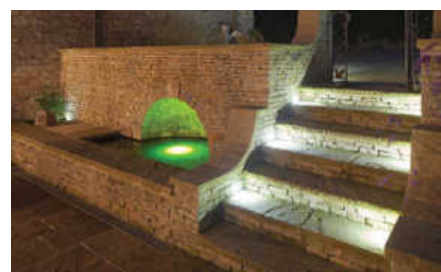
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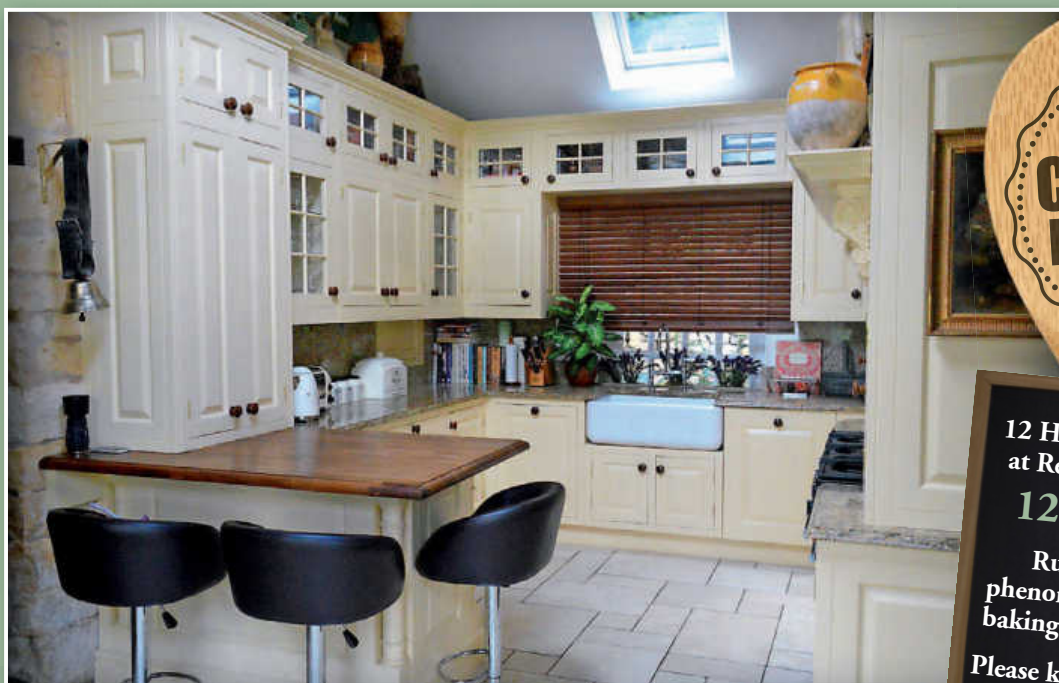
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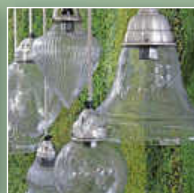
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COTSWOLD LIFE

Meet this month's contributors...

Katie Jarvis has been Cotswold Life chief writer for 13 years. She lives in Nailsworth with husband Ian, their three children, and Ruby the rescue dog.



Once New York correspondent for *The Times*, **Adam Edwards** is now based in the Cotswolds and writes for the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Financial Times*.

Candia McKormack began working for *Cotswold Life* 12 years ago as designer and is now deputy editor. She lives in Gloucester with husband Tony, two children and Sid the cat.



Tracy Spiers has over 25 years' media experience. A modern Mrs Bennet, she lives with husband Rog and their five daughters, and loves art, running and cappuccinos.

Sue Limb is a writer and broadcaster. She has written novels for adults and children, columns for the *Guardian* and *Good Housekeeping*, and many comedy series for Radio 4.



Clare Mackintosh lives in Chipping Norton with her husband and their three children. She is the author of psychological thrillers. Her first novel, *I Let You Go*, is out now.

Adam Henson is probably the best-known farmer in the UK, a popular BBC *Countryside* presenter, owner of the Cotswold Farm Park and a champion of rare breeds.



Quick contacts

Advertising: 01242 216050
Editorial: 01242 216050
Marketing: 01242 265897
Subscriptions: 0844 543 0056
 Full contact details on page 265



THIS MONTH'S COVER IMAGE:
 Alice in Wonderland
 White Rabbit concept art
 by Michael Kutsche/Alamy

We're looking for beautiful, eye-catching covers. If you think you have an image that would make a stunning cover for *Cotswold Life* please get in touch. Either email mike.lowe@archant.co.uk or candia.mckormack@archant.co.uk Images must be large enough to print A4 size at 300dpi.

Editor's comment

TIME - and the number 94 bus - waits for no man. But does that justify spending £3.8 million of public money on a bus lane that will save just four minutes of journey time on a service that runs every 10 minutes anyway?



fuselages while developing a bomb-proof luggage compartment. And who can forget the first time they drove down the A433 only to come across the breathtaking sight of a Jumbo jet seemingly parked in a farmer's field?

Cotswold Airport is a gem. It needs protecting from opportunist developers.

The controversial scheme, on the A40 westward towards the Benhall roundabout, will be disruptive to residents, cause many months of roadworks and will destroy green spaces. If this was the missing link in a dual carriageway that sped buses directly into the town centre, I could see some purpose in it. But there are plenty of pinch points further down the road that undermine that theory.

Yes, we need to do something about the traffic going into and out of Cheltenham, but spending such an enormous amount of money on what will be a marginal improvement simply doesn't make sense.

The money would be better spent elsewhere. I wonder how many of Cheltenham's myriad potholes could be repaired for £3.8 million?

MORE planning madness surrounds the barmy suggestion that the 2,000 new homes needed in the area should be built at Cotswold Airport rather than to the south of Cirencester. Setting aside the lunacy of plonking what amounts to a small, new town down in the middle of nowhere without any existing infrastructure, we should not underestimate the value of the former Kemble airfield to the region.

Over 150 people work at the airfield, many involved in the dismantling of redundant passenger jets for which an operational runway is essential. But there are other weird and wonderful enterprises going on as well. Most recently they were blowing up airplane

ANOTHER day, another depressing survey. This one claims that four out of 10 adults have never been to a countryside meadow while one in 10 have never heard a cow 'moo' in real life.

Apparently our experience of the countryside is limited to watching it on television (I blame Adam Henson) and that's when we're not all busy filling in our adult colouring books (what the Hell are those all about?).

Parents have to accept responsibility for getting their children out and about and teaching them about the countryside. Otherwise we'll end up with another generation that thinks potatoes grow on trees and bacon comes from cows.

THIS disengagement between consumers and the source of their food manifests itself at the Quedgeley flower and produce show, where entries were so sparse that organisers allowed 'competitors' to submit shop-bought vegetables. That's right: you could pop down to Tesco, buy half a dozen carrots and enter them in the prize vegetable section.

What a pointless exercise. You may as well allow racing cyclists to attach electric motors to their bikes or allow Olympic athletes to take performance-enhancing drugs. Oh, hang on...

Mike

mike.lowe@archant.co.uk
 Follow Mike on Twitter:
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September

Established 1967,
Volume 47 No 9



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10 REASONS WHY YOU'VE BOUGHT COTSWOLD LIFE THIS MONTH

- 1 To find out which celebrity was described by the Guardian as 'exotically packaged mediocrity'.
- 2 To discover which of our columnists is about to incur the ire of angry cyclists
- 3 To find out the best routes to take to Bristol Airport
- 4 To find out how to encourage hedgehogs into your garden
- 5 To discover which famous Cotswold actress has written her first radio play
- 6 To find out which Cotswold lad was named "the father of English geology"
- 7 To discover which priest had photographs of Lenin in his vestry
- 8 To find out which Cotswold drinks producer is still fed by a local spring
- 9 To find out where to buy free range turkey eggs
- 10 To find out how to win tickets to the Gloucester Old Spot Society dinner



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SOPHIE WARD'S
SAME-SEX CEREMONIES

“ They talk incredibly loudly and snatches of their mind-blowingly inane conversations constantly drift into my garden like a foul aural odour

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SCHÜCO



Seal of disapproval

The signet ring is a piece of modern nonsense - a geegaw
that men think shows their families in a noble light

One of the odder affectations of the average well-bred Cotswold man is the signet ring. Cotswold man is mostly a dress-down chap; his house is hidden, his clothes are understated and he abhors anything flash, with the exception, of course, of his beloved 4x4. And yet he wears a crested trinket on his pinkie finger that, he believes, shouts grandeur; a geegaw that, he thinks, shows his family in a noble light.

It is of course a piece of modern nonsense (and if the engraving is not reversed it is bogus nonsense as well). Crests were originally plates decorating the top of mediaeval helmets that by the end of the 12th century were used as seals by the high-born to prove a letter's authenticity. The crest subsequently evolved into a legally binding signature but fell out of practical use by the 19th century, although it was still required on official documents until the middle of that century.

There can only be a handful of people in Britain who can claim a direct line to the aristocracy of the Middle Ages (our own Tetbury-based Prince of Wales being a notable exception). Most coats of arms and their crests were created long after they had fallen out of usefulness by new Victorian money, by the brewers and slavers and the coal, steel, and rail barons, to give them the social cachet that their own trades did not. And most were adopted under the old French adage 'the rightful owner is he who first uses it'.

My own family crest, for example, is a complete sham. It is of a bloke with a walking stick with an obligatory Latin inscription beneath the engraving. It was 'acquired' by my great-great-grandfather on my father's side when he was made a Moravian bishop. My great-grandfather on my mother's side, on the other hand, was a Portsmouth barber and I see no reason why I could not equally as well wear a signet ring depicting a striped barber's pole engraved with the Latin motto 'Barba Nigra Oves' (Barber Blacksheep).



Every computer, every mobile, every car dashboard tells you the time. The wristwatch has become little more than a subtle way of showing off

The signet ring in the 21st century is little more than visual proof that at some stage in the last couple of hundred years, one member of a family had enough money to buy a coat of arms from the College of Arms. (The current price charged by the College of Arms for the whole kit and caboodle - arms, crest and motto - is £5,550. The College recently created a not very baronial coat of arms for Speaker John Bercow, for example, featuring a ladder, four roundels and pink triangles - the ladder representing his rise from humble origins as the son of a taxi driver, the roundels showing his love of tennis and the triangles his support for gay rights.)

Meanwhile with the arrival of summer

and the rolled-up sleeve, I have noticed the other piece of flash male jewellery that has in recent years been aggressively adopted by new Cotswold money - the wristwatch. The fashionable watch can now cost not just thousands but tens of thousands of pounds - there is even a website titled '10 Watches More Expensive than a Ferrari'. Once upon a time the watch was a mechanical wonder, as breathtaking as an iPhone, and the gold pocket watch was its apogee. It eventually gave way to the understated wristwatch, which developed into the swanky timepiece of today. But now that too has become an anachronism. Every computer, every mobile, every car dashboard tells you the time. The wristwatch has become, like the signet ring, little more than a subtle way of showing off.

What is a shame is that with the exception of those two objects, no Englishman and certainly no man I know in the Cotswolds, wears any other jewellery. And yet for thousands of years it was acceptable to do so. Saxon men wore fantastic pieces, the Tudor and Stuarts flaunted sparklers and so did the Regency dandies. Even the staid Victorians boasted cufflinks, diamond studs, watch chains and stickpins. But after the Great War the English gent limited himself to a wristwatch, wedding band and the quiet signet ring.

As with everything in life there has to be a backlash to this austerity in personal flamboyance. It has already started with tattoos, which many privately educated male children now sport. With luck the expensive wristwatch will metamorphose into a simple well-designed bracelet for men and the signet ring will eventually be replaced by something much more amusing and imaginative. ■

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Capital offence

The teachers escorted their students away from the mean-spirited woman from the Cotswolds, who resented delaying her journey by two minutes to allow a group of disabled children a stress-free escalator ride

Having chosen to set my next novel in London, I am finding myself spending more and more time there. I rather like the meandering train journey from Kington, which gives me time to adjust from the slow pace of life in the Cotswolds to the hustle and bustle of life in the capital. Once there I find myself quickening my step, even though I have plenty of time on my hands, keeping pace with the commuters and their busy lives.

Last Wednesday I pushed through the ticket barriers at Piccadilly Circus along with several dozen others, funnelling towards the escalator. Directly ahead of me was a group of around eight school children, each holding the hand of an adult. Adults and children alike were wearing fluorescent tabards bearing the name of a school. It was apparent that the children had profound disabilities, and I held back a little, to give them some space.

A young boy was reluctant to step onto the escalator, and we waited for a minute or two until he was persuaded to move. Once on the escalator the group fanned out, the children's special needs quite rightly trumping London's 'keep right' escalator etiquette.

Somebody behind me let out an exasperated sigh. One of the teachers turned round and glared at me. I smiled and shook my head, trying to convey through the medium of mime that the sigh hadn't come from me, but she had already turned back to her charge. A man behind me tutted, then pushed past the children and made his way down the escalator. The teacher let out a short cry of dismay, glancing behind her and catching my eye once more.

I smiled again. "Some people are in such a terrible hurry," I said in a conciliatory tone. The teacher scowled, then spoke loudly enough for the entire Underground



“I would walk slowly. I decided, thereby demonstrating that I wasn't, in fact, in a hurry”

to hear. "I'm afraid I don't care if you're in a hurry. You'll just have to wait - these children are disabled." I was horrified.

"But..." I began, realising she had misinterpreted my sympathetic comment for an expression of my own impatience, "that's not what I meant. I was referring to..." My protestations were ignored. The bit now firmly between her teeth, the teacher rounded on me. "Two minutes, that's all we're talking. Is that really going to make a difference to your journey? These kids have never been on the tube before; they're already stressed enough about it."

"But I didn't mean..." I said frantically, "I'm really not in a hurry."

"Disgusting," someone said above me. "Disabled kids, and you can't wait a couple of minutes." There was a general muttered consensus and I felt the heat of accusatory eyes burning into the back of my head. Never had it taken so long to descend an escalator. Never had I felt so embarrassed. Never had I been so wrongly accused. I contemplated trying to defend myself; demanding silence as I explained the

nuance of my ill-chosen comment, finishing with an assurance that I was a passionate advocate for accessibility. But it was too late.

We reached the bottom of the escalator and the teachers escorted their students towards the platform, away from the mean-spirited woman from the Cotswolds, who resented delaying her journey by two minutes to allow a group of disabled children a stress-free escalator ride.

I would walk slowly, I decided, thereby demonstrating that I wasn't, in fact, in a hurry. Perhaps it would introduce some doubt into the minds of those who were, even now, tutting at the back of my head. I sauntered off the escalator, ambling along as though taking a stroll along the beach.

Nobody listens in London, I decided. They're all too wrapped up in their own lives. Such a horrible misunderstanding wouldn't have happened in the Cotswolds (and not only because there aren't any escalators). I mused on this point for a moment, idling vaguely in the direction of the trains.

"She wasn't in a hurry at all," I heard one girl say to another, as they overtook me in an indignant flurry. "She just doesn't care about disabled children."

I stepped to my right and allowed my enormous handbag to bang against her legs, earning myself another glare. May as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb, after all. ■

I Let You Go, published by Sphere. Out in paperback now. For more information visit

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Insider's Guide

Edited by Candia McKormack candia.mckormack@archant.co.uk

COTSWOLD LIFE COMPETITION EXTRA



WIN! with Blenheim Palace Literary Festival

Nobel-prize-winning Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk talks to *The Independent* journalist and chair of judges for the 2016 Booker international prize Boyd Tonkin about his new and ninth novel *A Strangeness in My Mind* - an unforgettable love story and a modern epic. It is a rare opportunity to hear one of the world's most influential writers.

The evening is then followed by reception drinks and a three-course meal with wines and coffee at The Feathers Hotel, Woodstock.

Blenheim Palace Festival of Literature Film & Music runs from Thursday, September 24 to Sunday, September 27, 2015.

www.blenheimpalaceliteraryfestival.com

Terms and conditions: Competition closes on Monday, September 14, 2015. The Orhan Pamuk talk begins at 6pm in the Orangery at Blenheim Palace. The dinner begins with a drinks reception at 8pm at The Feathers Hotel. Dress code: jacket and tie. Entrants must be 18 years or older. Full Archant terms and conditions apply and can be found at www.cotswoldlife.co.uk

Win a pair of tickets to the Orhan Pamuk event and dinner in conjunction with Blenheim Palace Festival of Literature, Film and Music

COMPETITION

To enter, answer the below question and email your answer along with your name and full contact details to competition@cotswoldlife.co.uk quoting code CL15BPLF. Alternatively, you can post your answer along with full contact details to *Cotswold Life* Blenheim Palace Literary Festival competition - CL15BPLF, c/o Katie Tait, Cumberland House, Oriel Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 1BB.

Q: In which year did Orhan Pamuk receive the Nobel Prize for Literature?

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Q: Marrakech is in which country?

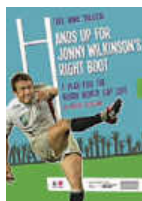
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Best Parties Ever - Moonlit in Marrakech

WATCH
OUT FOR...



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Commissioned by Live Wire Theatre Company and funded by The Arts Council England the intriguingly entitled new play by award-winning South West playwright Dougie Blaxland comes to The Everyman Studio Theatre, Cheltenham, to coincide with The Rugby World Cup 2015. www.livewiretheatreproductions.co.uk

WIN! a table at Alice in Winterland



To mark the 150th Anniversary of the Lewis Carroll classic novel, Hype Agency returns to Cheltenham this Christmas to transform Cheltenham Town Hall into a topsy turvy land of tomfoolery and madness with its Alice in Winterland, Curiouser and Curiouser Christmas party nights.

Following the sell-out success of its 2014 Nutcracker-themed parties, from Friday, December 11 to Friday, December 18, the Bristol-based party specialists are promising an even bigger and better festive celebration for local businesses and groups of friends, with entertainment, dinner and endless possibilities all included.

Just like Alice, party-goers will need to drink a welcome potion upon arrival to shrink into the magical world where nothing is quite as it seems, and celebrate the season with beloved characters including The Queen of Hearts, Cheshire Cat and the Mad Hatter.

Once inside Winterland, they too will need to ask themselves "Which road do I take?" although it doesn't matter really, as all paths have no end!

Tables will be dressed fit for the Mad Hatter's tea party and laid out will be a scrumptious two or three-course dinner crafted from fresh local, seasonal ingredients by award-winning in-house caterers, Fosters Events, before the tea and coffee station opens and madness unravels before guests' very eyes - and feet - in the disco.



When you wake up the following morning you will wonder if it was all just a dream...

Event Director, Gemma Box, says, "We're thrilled to be returning to Cheltenham Town Hall with the Alice in Winterland Christmas parties, especially during the milestone 150th Anniversary of the release of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

"Available for exclusive hire and shared parties, the Alice in Winterland nights are perfect for large businesses and even smaller groups of friends, family members and colleagues to relive their childhood memories and celebrate Christmas in magical - or mad - style!"

COMPETITION

Win a fully catered table of 10 with arrival drinks and a two-course meal each plus entertainment on Monday, December 15, 2015. To be in with a chance of winning a table for you and nine friends, send your full contact details to Cotswold Life Alice in Winterland Christmas Party Night Competition - CLCHRISTMAS15, c/o Katie Tait, Archant House, Oriel Road, Cheltenham, GL50 1BB. Alternatively, you can email your answer, with your full contact details, quoting code CLCHRISTMAS15, to competition@cotswoldlife.co.uk.

Q: What anniversary is the famous book *Alice in Wonderland* celebrating during 2015?

Terms and conditions: Competition closes at midday on Friday, September 18, 2015. Full Archant terms and conditions can be found at www.cotswoldlife.co.uk

Eavesdropper

Overheard during the last month...

• 'I don't feel like a pioneer!'

On the feast day of the Bible's most radical woman, Mary Magdalene, Rachel Treweek becomes the bishop of Gloucester and is urged to be 'as subversive as Jesus's most prominent female follower' by the bishop of Stepney, the Right Rev Adrian Newman. Treweek says she hopes to become the new 'normal' -

The Guardian

• 'I had the chance to introduce the lead singer of Supertramp, but not for the first time in my life I missed my big moment.'

Dom Joly, who says he's 'fine being a giant squirrel, but being 'me' is hell', self-medicates with a bottle of champagne before he's due to introduce one of his heroes at Cornbury Music Festival and completely misses his cue -

The Independent

• 'Liz Hurley sells home for £9m (thanks to 200% rise in farmland prices).'

As farmland values are 'rising faster than house prices in Mayfair' according to estate agents, the actress sells the Cotswold home she bought for £3.3m in 2002 for a considerable profit. The hike is partly put down to wealthy buyers being attracted to 'the *Archers* lifestyle' -

The Telegraph

• 'Forget girls in pearls... she's a corker with a little porker!'

Twenty-five-year-old pig breeder Dorothy Scott poses with Ginger the Gloucestershire Old Spot for Country Life's 'posh Page Three' feature. Dorothy moved from London to the Cotswolds to set up her business Dottie's Pigs -

Daily Mail

• '2,000-year-old cat's paw print uncovered in Gloucester.'

The cat is thought to have snuck across the wet clay tiles in Gloucester around AD100, probably at the annoyance of the tile makers, and has only just been noticed by a city archaeologist -

The Telegraph

• 'Just met a gorgeous little donkey foal @ CotswoldFarmPrk!'

Adam Henson is understandably entranced by this adorable creature, born on his farm, near Guiting Power - via Twitter



ADAM HENSON



The Churn Valley Flower Festival: September 12, 2-5.30pm & September 13, 2-5pm
St Margaret's Church, Bagendon, near Cirencester (GL7 7DU). Cream teas will be served on both afternoons providing an ideal opportunity for everyone to enjoy this historic church and its beautiful setting.

Artists in Residence

Artist Melanie is floating

5-MINUTE INTERVIEW

Melanie Wright

Last month saw the completion of artist Melanie Wright's year as 'Artist in Residence' at Charlie Longsdon Racing, Chipping Norton.

Melanie, whose equestrian paintings range from racing to polo and dressage subjects, was given the experience - by AiR (Artists in Residence) www.artists-in-residence.co.uk, to focus on the colourful world of National Hunt Racing for a year, with an insider artist's view and from the perspective of one of its finest training yards.

The year's residency culminates in an exhibition at the Owners' Day lunch at the training yard. Melanie has produced a rich variety of sketches, watercolours and oil paintings depicting stable-yard scenes, dynamic days at the races, and riding out compositions, together with portraits commissioned by the owners of individual horses in training.

Where did you train in art, Melanie, and what led to you becoming an equestrian artist?

I trained at Heatherley's School of Fine Art in London, with an emphasis on portraiture and life painting. My grandmother was a landscape painter and so from a young age I enjoyed sketching and painting in the landscape. I grew up handling and riding horses and many years later, after running a portrait studio in London returned to live in the country, and to painting the things that inspire me most. Landscape, people and horses.

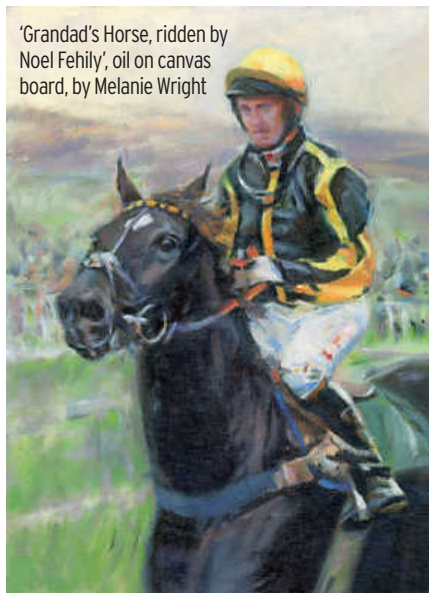
How did the residency at Charlie Longsdon Racing come about?

The Artist in Residence organisation AiR contacted me back in 2013. Their experience of organising residencies for artists and a connection with Charlie Longsdon Racing provided a perfect match of a National Hunt Stables Residency host with an Equestrian Artist... particularly so as Charlie's yard at Hull Farm and my studio in Chipping Norton are within a few miles of each other!

What do you feel you got out of it?

A unique opportunity to explore, observe and

'Grandad's Horse, ridden by Noel Fehily', oil on canvas board, by Melanie Wright



I will miss being up at Hull Farm in that lovely setting... early on clear, if sometimes chilly, mornings, through the seasons

record the day to day workings of a training yard through the seasons. And the inspiration, intense focus and creative journey that evolves from being connected with one place over a sustained period of time.

Were you accepted by members of staff, riders and visitors there, and were they intrigued by what you were doing?

Yes. A positive experience all round. CLR is a highly professional but nevertheless very friendly yard, and I enjoyed meeting the riders and visitors at the Owners and Open days last September, when AiR first presented me as artist in residence. Everyone has been welcoming and interested in what I was doing, from keeping me posted on which horses were running where, going to the races with them and patiently leading out horses in the yard while they posed for their portraits.

What have been some of the highlights of the residency?

Accompanying the team to days at the races;



'At the Start, Cheltenham', by Melanie Wright

sketching at Cheltenham; enjoying the buzz and chatting to the owners, breeders and race-going enthusiasts at the track.

Painting in the fields at Hull Farm on sunny afternoons with the horses turned out en masse, with the sun on their backs; watching them interact and weave around in large groups, and then seeing the stable lads and girls calling and bringing them in at the end of the day. Also, presenting the owners who commissioned portraits of their horses with the completed painting is always so rewarding, too.

Creating the Artist in Residence blog, which can be viewed on my website, was a great way for me to see the residency develop, the painting progress and to have a record of the year for posterity!

What media do you use to produce your pieces?

I enjoy working with a variety of media according to how I respond to the subject and what it is I wish to express. For quickly drawn sketchbook studies I use a sanguine (terracotta-coloured) pencil. The softness of charcoal, or fluidity of watercolour, is ideal for catching the movement and energy of horses travelling at speed. I like to use oils to play up the brilliant colours of a jockey's silks, the gleam on a horse's coat and the morning light out on the gallops.

What can the owners expect to see at the Owners' Day exhibition? And where else can people expect to see your paintings?

Original paintings, prints and sketches, and some formal portraits of their horses displayed alongside riding out scenes, race day compositions and stable yard sketches.

I will also be displaying some pictures from the residency at the CLR Open Day, in September, which is open to the public. For date and details visit: www.charlielongsdonracing.com An e-catalogue of works for sale from my CLR residency is also available to view on the AiR website.

WATCH
OUT FOR...



Cheltenham Comedy Festival: September 20-26
With highlights including John Wagstaffe, Hal Cruttenden,
Josh Widdicombe, and The Hobgoblin Festival Finale with
Arthur Smith and Mitch Benn. www.cheltenhamcomedy.com



on AiR

Stable yard scene, by Melanie Wright



You also teach art to others. What's this experience like for you, and how can potential students find out more?

Though 80% of my time is spent painting, I enjoy helping others to develop their drawing and painting, and sharing skills with keen beginners and the more experienced alike. I tutor on a bespoke one-to-one basis at my studio, and occasionally run workshops for small groups at inspirational locations in the Cotswolds. You can find out more on the 'Tuition' section of my website.

Now the residency has come to an end are you going to miss being part of the furniture at Hull Farm, and what do you have planned next?

It has been a great experience to have such open access to the stables, and I will miss being up at Hull Farm in that lovely setting... early on clear, if sometimes chilly, mornings, through the seasons. Waiting for the familiar lines of horses to appear in the distance and emerge across the fields towards the gallops, chatting and waving to me as they pass, then flying past at speed, back up the track in groups. There is a rhythm and timeless quality to this scene which will stay with me. Looking ahead, I have several creative projects, both in the USA where I spend a part of the year and here in the UK. Another residency at some point in the future would be interesting, possibly at a polo club or dressage establishment. For the next few months, however, I will be continuing with existing commissions and starting new painting projects, and also planning a gallery exhibition in London for 2016.

Contact Melanie on 01608 643546, mobile: 07792 580788, email: melaniewrightstudio@gmail.com. Website: melaniewrightartist.co.uk
For more information about AiR visit: www.artists-in-residence.co.uk

Photographic Exhibition: September 16-22, 10am-5pm

Photographic evidence



'Cheltenham Cricket Festival', by Ian Gee

Cheltenham Camera Club is celebrating its 150th Anniversary with a series of events including an exhibition at the Gardens Gallery in Montpellier, Cheltenham, this month in aid of local charity Linc.

On Saturday, September 19 and Sunday, 20 there will be a portrait studio within the gallery. Come and be photographed and, if you like the result, it will be printed and mounted immediately for you to take away, with all proceeds going to Linc.

Cheltenham Camera Club was founded in 1865 by Dr Edward T Wilson, a pioneer of scientific as well as pictorial photography, and was the first of

many enduring contributions he made to the town. It is the sixth oldest photographic society in the UK and the only cultural society in the town with such a continuous history.

To commemorate its sesquicentennial the club has published two books, a history of photography in Cheltenham and A Year and a Day, a portrait of the town today. Both will be available at the gallery. A variety of striking photographs will be available for sale at the exhibition, including local scenes, natural history and creative images.

Further details from Ian Gee on 01242 261918 or visit cheltenhamcameraclub.co.uk

Five Valleys Walk: Sunday, September 27

Stomping out meningitis

Meningitis Now's annual 21-mile circular Five Valleys Walk, this year in partnership with Connexus, falls on Sunday, September 27.

Giffords Circus will be performing from their Fennels Farm base near Slad, and the charity has also organised face painters, live music and a children's nature trail, as well as a variety of food and drink, to line the route, making it a fun-filled family day out.

"Whether you love rambling, circuses, food or entertainment, there's something for you on this year's special walk, and you'll be helping to beat meningitis with every step," says charity chief executive Sue Davie.

The walk, which passes through each of Stroud's five valleys - Painswick, Slad, Toadsmoor, Chalford and Nailsworth - is split into nine sections. Walkers can start at any of them, and catch a free Stagecoach bus back to their start point if they don't want to walk the whole circuit.

Walkers who sign up in advance pay just £10 per adult and £5 per child aged 16 and under. Under threes go free. Family tickets for two adults and two children cost £25. Those joining on the day pay slightly more.



Participants receive a welcome pack, sponsor forms, a route map and certificate, and free fruit and water during the walk.

This year's top individual fundraiser stands to win a champagne hot air balloon flight courtesy of Bristol Balloons. There is also a raffle with a variety of prizes.

Meningitis Now hopes to raise £40,000 from the walk to help fund its programmes of preventative research, awareness and support for those affected by the disease.

Register online at www.fivevalleyswalk.com or call 0345 120 4530 for more information.



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Louis Turpin exhibition: September 5-October 3

Following his sell-out show of 2013 at Bohun Gallery, Louis Turpin returns to the Oxfordshire art gallery with a new collection of paintings celebrating his Passion for Gardens. Bohun Gallery, 15 Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1AB, tel: 01491 576228, www.bohungallery.co.uk

September highlights

• John Busby Retrospective: until September 6

A special selection of retrospective and recent work by one of the 20th-century's most influential nature-inspired artists. Nature in Art, Wallsworth Hall, A38 Twigworth, Gloucester, GL2 9PA, tel: 01452 733942, www.nature-in-art.org.uk

• Sympathy with the Devil: until September 6

Local artist Amanda Cox's fine art multimedia exhibition is inspired by her fascination with the playwright Dennis Potter and how his work both reflects and challenges the status quo. Dean Heritage Centre, Camp Mill, Soudley, Forest of Dean, GL14 2UB, tel: 01594 822170, www.deanheritagecentre.com

• Lazy, Hazy, Crazy: until September 11

An exhibition celebrating summer in all its glory. Gallery Pangolin, 9 Chalford Industrial Estate, Chalford, Stroud, GL6 8NT, tel: 01453 889765, www.gallery-pangolin.com

• The Arts and Crafts House - Then and Now: until September 13

This exhibition traces the origins, legacy and enduring appeal of the Arts & Crafts Movement and its fascination with the creation of the home. Compton Verney, Warwickshire, CV35 9HZ, tel: 01926 645500, www.comptonverney.org.uk

• The Names of the Hare: until September 19

This mixed media show includes evocative paintings and prints, jewellery, textiles and felt, ceramics, wood, wire and metal sculpture, books and more. Part of the Cirencester Hare Festival 2015. Free admission. New Brewery Arts, Cirencester, GL7 1JL, tel: 01285 657181, www.newbreweryarts.org.uk

• In the Making: until September 20

An exciting display of 24 objects, captured mid-manufacture, and offers visitors the opportunity to explore familiar objects. Entry free for children aged 15 and under, £5 for adults. The Wilson, Clarence Street, Cheltenham, GL50 3JT, tel: 01242 775707, cheltenhammuseum.org.uk

• Morris and Company Tile Exhibition: until September 27

This stunning exhibition of patterned and story tiles from a private collection provides a survey of Morris and Company's designs and production techniques. On Saturday, August 8 at 11.30am, Linda Porter will give a talk about decorative tiles. Court Barn Museum, Church Street, Chipping Campden, GL55 6JE

• An Elegant Society: until October 4

Well-known to collectors and Jane Austen enthusiasts, Irish artist Adam Buck (1759-1833) was one of Regency England's most sought-after portrait painters. This summer exhibition celebrates Adam Buck's influence on Georgian art and style, showing over 60 works from private collections. Ashmolean Museum of Art



Above: Sarah Brooker's hand-rolled felt artwork (September 12-October 5)

Gloucester History Festival: September 5-18

The time team

This month's Gloucester History Festival has a full programme of events. Here are some of the highlights:

- **Gloucester Day** Colourful parades mark Saturday, September 5, the day - back in 1643 - when the besieged city was rescued by the forces of the Earl of Essex during the Civil War. Celebrations continue with a week-long programme at venues such as the Soldiers of Gloucester Museum, the Folk Museum, the Waterways Museum and the City Museum.
- **Musical Moments** Gloucester Mayor Sebastian Field, who also sings in the cathedral choir, will be giving a series of performances, including a concert of lute songs compiled by Robert Dowland.
- **Heritage Open Days** From September 10-13, the city will participate in Heritage Open days, allowing members of the public free access into historic areas normally kept behind lock and key: www.heritageopendays.org.uk
- **Blackfriars Talks** Held in the stunning surroundings of Blackfriars Priory, a 13th Century Dominican Priory, a series of talks will throw light on local, national and international history - particularly, in this anniversary year, on Winston Churchill.

► **Read our interview with Sir Nicholas Soames on page 152.**

and Archaeology, University of Oxford, Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2PH, www.ashmolean.org

• Worcestershire Open Studios: August 29-31

Creative spaces across the county will be opening their doors to visitors as part of the Open Studios weekend. Featuring 70 artists at 27 different venues. Free admission. www.worcestershireopenstudios.org.uk

• A Midsummer Night's Dream: September 2-5

Chedworth Drama Productions present Shakespeare in the open, directed by Ross Aldridge and Martin Abbott. Performances at 7pm, with Saturday matinée at 2.30pm. In support of Winston's Wish and Friends of St Andrews, Chedworth. Tickets £12-£15 adults; £6-£8 under 16s, available by calling Cotswold

TV on 01285 831848 (9am-5pm), or online from www.chedworthdrama.co.uk

• **Salon Privé: September 3-5** This unique three-day show is held in the grounds of Blenheim Palace and features an incredible collection of classic, super, hyper and concept cars. www.salonpriveconcours.com

• **Moreton-in-Marsh Show: Saturday, September 5** A celebration of the great British countryside at Moreton Showground. Advance adult tickets £13.50; children £4.50. Tel: 01608 651908, www.moretonshow.co.uk

• **Honeybourne Village Show: Saturday, September 5, 1-5pm** Honeybourne's first ever village show featuring a traditional produce and handicrafts competition, with Joan Bomford, winner of the *Countryfile* Farming



Auction Sale of Antiques and Fine Art: Thursday, September 17, 10am

Featuring contemporary art, ex-Paris, Asian ceramics and various oriental works of art, plus a fine gem set jewellery and silver section. Public viewing September 16, 8am-7pm and on the morning of the sale from 7.30am. Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham. Call Martin Lambert on 01451 821666 or visit www.taylerandfletcher.co.uk

September highlights

Hero award, presenting the trophies. There will also be live music and dance performances, displays, children's activities, refreshments and a grand raffle. Honeybourne Sport and Recreation Field, WR11 7PE, email: show@honeybourne.org.uk

• **Comedy All Stars: Saturday, September 5, 8pm** Featuring Preston funnyman Tony Vino as MC, plus Geoff Whiting and Sol Bernstein. Tickets: £10 adv; £14 door. Subscription Rooms, George Street, Stroud, GL5 1AE, tel: 01453 760900, www.subscriptionrooms.org.uk

• **Emma's Trust Summer Festival: September 5 & 6** Free family festival in a massive big top, featuring live music, dance, children's workshops, fair rides, food stalls, community market, drama sessions, Go Kart Party, and animals from Cotswold Farm Park. Gala Concert on Sunday; tickets £10. Chipping Norton Cricket Club, www.emmastrust.com

• **Nature Study - An exhibition of printmaking by Angie Lewin: September 5-26** An exciting selection of lithographs inspired by plant-forms in nature and still-life, plus some wood-engraving, silkscreen and lino-cuts. Sarah Wiseman Gallery, 40-41 South Parade, Oxford, OX2 7JL, tel: 01865 515123, www.wisegal.com

• **Country Car Boot Sale: Sunday, September 6, 8.30am** A fundraiser for Shipston Home Nursing at Honington Hall Estate, near Shipston-on-Stour, CV36 5AA. Call Rebecca on 01608 674929 for more information.

• **Wyck Rissington Open Gardens: Sunday, September 6, 1-5pm** Four beautiful gardens open as part of NGS. Admission £6; children free. Parking, wheelchair access.

• **Passions of Colour - New Work by Bridget Lansley: September 6-26** Bridget Lansley's love of Scotland, the shooting season, racing and the countryside is portrayed in her latest solo exhibition, featuring around 35 paintings. Fosse Gallery, The Manor House, The Square, Stow-on-the-Wold, GL54 1AF, tel: 01451 831319, www.fossegallery.com

• **Block Printing workshop: Wednesday, September 9, 7.30-9.30pm** Learn the simple technique of printing onto fabric & paper. Cost £15, to include materials, sampler fabric and one item to print (eg tote bag, tea towel, etc.) Other items available to purchase. Lechlade Craft Barn, Orchard House South, Downington, Lechlade, GL7 3DL, tel: 01367 700350 or email jennie@lechladecraftbarn.com

• **The Thoughtful Gardener: Thursday, September 10** A day of thought-provoking lectures and pop-up talks to raise funds for three charities: The Butterfly Garden in Cheltenham; St James' City Farm in Gloucester



Above: 'Island Summer' by Angie Lewin
(Sarah Wiseman Gallery, September 5-26)

and The Harlesden Town Garden in London. For more information call Rich Pickings on 01285 760651 or visit www.richpickings.biz

• **Jewellery Auction: September 10 & 24, 10am** Specialist jewellery auction, part of Fellows' calendar of regular sales. Full list on website. Fellows Auctioneers and Valuers, 19 Augusta Street, Birmingham, B18 6JA, tel: 0121 212 2131, www.fellows.co.uk

• **Vintage on the Park: Saturday, September 12, 11am-4.30pm** Tewkesbury Vintage Fair presents a vintage extravaganza with an indoor vintage market, authentic entertainment, including live music, lindy hop dance demo, vintage fashion show, classic cars, and free vintage shuttle bus. Free entry, with donations to Midlands Air Ambulance. Tewkesbury Park Hotel, GL20 7DN, www.tewkesburyvintagefair.co.uk

• **Bretforton Show: Saturday, September 12, 1-5pm** Attractions include the exhibition of show entries, Bretforton's silver band, Worcester Owl Conservation Group, British vintage motorbikes, craft stalls, children's activities, Evesham Rangers Air Gun League, refreshments and a real ale tent from National Trust-owned Fleece Inn. Small entry charge, with all proceeds going to St Richard's Hospice, Worcester. Free car parking. Bretforton Manor, near Evesham, www.bretfortonshow.co.uk

• **Minchinhampton Country Fayre: Saturday, September 12, 12 noon-5pm** This bi-annual event is a great community day, with funds distributed to local charities. Attractions include vintage cars, a procession of local

groups and children, Pied Piper storytelling, Walking with Hawks, pony rides, fun fair, dog agility, flower displays, and food court area. Free entry, with lots of free parking.

• **Charity Bake-Off: Saturday, September 12** Support two great charities - Sands and Winchcombe Day Centre - and enjoy a cuppa and delicious cakes, at Ruth Winters' 12-hour charity bake-off. The Tile Barn & Redbrook Kitchens, Units 1-4 Park Farm, Evesham Road, Greet, Winchcombe, GL54 5BX, tel: 01242 621164/01242 621177, www.thetilebarn.com / www.redbrookkitchens.com and www.justgiving.com/RuthWinters65

• **Deeply Felt: September 12-October 5** Recent work by Sarah Brooker, to include framed and unframed hand-rolled felts, with beaches, tides, oceans, pebbles and the coastline as the theme. Celestino Valenti will also be showing hand-tied wire sculptures of shells to compliment the theme. Corinium Museum, Park Street, Cirencester, GL7 2BX, tel: 01285 655611, coriniummuseum.org

• **Shelsley Walsh Bike Festival: Sunday, September 13, 8.30am-4.30pm** This new bike festival is a 'must do' day out for all motorcycling enthusiasts... plus all event proceeds go to The Nationwide Association of Blood Bikes and Severn Freewheelers. Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb, Shelsley Walsh, Worcestershire, WR6 6RP Advance tickets: Special introductory price of just £10 (£15 on the day); children under 16 years go free. For further information or to book advance tickets please visit www.shelsleybikefestival.co.uk

• **Battle of Britain: Sunday, September 13, 10.30am-12.30pm** To commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, a military parade and civic procession will set off at 10.45am from the Town Hall. Call 01295

September highlights

250340 or email info@banbury.gov.uk

• **Patchwork workshop: Tuesday, September 15, 10am-3pm** Learn traditional patchwork techniques. Cost £30, including all materials.

Lechlade Craft Barn, Orchard House South, Downington, Lechlade, GL7 3DL, tel: 01367 700350 or email jennie@lechladecraftbarn.com

• **Cheltenham Camera Club Exhibition: September 16-22**

As part of its 150th Anniversary celebrations, the club is holding an exhibition of members' work at the Gardens Gallery, Montpellier, Cheltenham, in aid of LINC charity.

• **Valuation Day: Thursday, September 17, 10am-4pm** A fundraising valuation day for Shipston Home Nursing at Whichford Pottery, Whichford, Shipston-on-Stour, CV36 5PG, tel: 01608 684416, organised by JS Fine Art of Banbury (www.jsauctions.co.uk)

• **Shipston Food Festival: September 18-20** Featuring Shipston Beer Festival from 4pm on Friday, Sept 18, with homemade curries and live music from 6pm; Food Festival competitions on Saturday 19 at Townsend Hall, Sheep Street; and the main Food Festival on Sunday 20 from 10am. www.shipstonfoodfestival.co.uk

• **BakeAthon: Saturday, September 19, 8am-8pm** A fundraising event for Shipston Home Nursing. Free entry. Shipston Sports Club, London Road, CV36 4EP, tel: 01608 674929, www.shipstonsnhome nursing.co.uk

• **Amberley Art Trail: September 19 & 20, 11am-4pm** Featuring work by over 20 artists, including fine art, embroidery, engraved glass, handmade dolls and jewellery, across the beautiful village of Amberley. Email amberleyarttrail@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/amberleyarttrail

• **House and Garden - An Exhibition of New Work by Rebecca Campbell: September 20-October 3** Featuring approximately 35 of Rebecca's delightful, enigmatic and highly imaginative paintings evoking a world of plants and animals. Brian Sinfield Gallery, 127 The Hill, High Street, Burford, Oxfordshire, OX18 4RE, tel: 01993 824 464, www.briansinfield.com

• **Blenheim Palace Festival of Literature, Film and Music: September 24-27** One of the major events of the autumn literary season, this year's Festival will be the first to combine literature, film and music. Highlights include Turkish Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk, Dr Maki Mandela, Alfred Brendel, Andrew Gant, Prince Asfa-Wossen Asserate, Max Mosley, and Paul Gambaccini. blenheimpalaceliteraryfestival.com

• **Macmillan Cancer Support Biggest Coffee Morning: Friday, September 25, 10am-12.30pm** A great opportunity for early Christmas shopping and an opportunity to meet new friends. Free entry, free parking, great coffee, plus the chance to meet the Mayor and local MPs. East Glos Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7DF, tel: 01242 704656, www.eastglos.co.uk, www.macmillan.org.uk

• **The 9th Telegraph Children's Literature Festival: September 25-October 4** The largest dedicated children's literature festival in the UK, with over 120 events featuring the best children's and teen authors and illustrators, including Julia Donaldson, Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Rosen, Judith Kerr, Axel Scheffler, Julian Clary and Floella Benjamin. www.bathfestivals.org.uk

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In the NEXT ISSUE... October 2015

W S Cirencester, Painswick, and Oxford

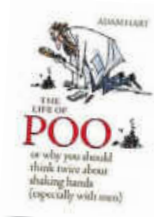


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Cheltenham Literature Festival Rachel Johnson on family rivalry

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COBBLES TO THE COUNCIL

Sir,
I write to you about the importance of preserving Cirencester's character. We have a small crossing in Cirencester that is cobbled. It's like an unofficial zebra crossing where you run the gauntlet of will they/won't they stop for you to cross.

The council did a temporary repair in tarmac, which is now spreading and making the problem worse/uglier with the cobbles now re-appearing. The whole repair job will now be much more expensive than it was before the temporary fix.

We are being told they will not be replacing the cobbles, but tarmacking as they "can't afford people to lay them properly" because the repair men will have to return "every month when the cobbles come up again".

Surely, if they're done properly, they will last for years. But more importantly the Roman town of Cirencester will retain its character. We need to fight for the little things like this.

Yours, having never written to an editor before and feeling a bit middle-aged.

Oli Christie
Cirencester

EDITOR'S NOTE: It does seem bizarre that the Romans could lay cobbles that would last for thousands of years, but the council can't lay cobbles that can last for more than a few months.



The so-called temporary repair to Roman cobbles

A DELIGHTFUL INTERVIEW

Sir,
I am writing to say how much I enjoyed Katie Jarvis's interview with Jeremy Irons. His charm and enthusiasm really came across and who can blame Katie if he made her go a little weak at the knees!

Diana Farmer
Cirencester

PRETENTIOUS RUBBISH

Sir,
I just read the interview with Jeremy Irons in the latest edition of your magazine with utter dismay and disbelief. It is the biggest load of pretentious self-serving nonsense I have ever had the misfortune

to clap eyes upon. Your so-called journalist got to interview one of the world's greatest actors and totally wasted that opportunity, making repeated references to *Brideshead Revisited* - a series he made THIRTY FIVE YEARS AGO at the very start of his career - filling far too much of the two pages with dull irrelevant pretentious chitter chatter. So we end up learning nothing new whatsoever about the great man.

Rupert Holmes
Oxford

EDITOR'S NOTE: Horses for courses, I suppose. I happen to think that Katie is a brilliant writer and that we are blessed to have her.

BULLIED BY BIGGER VEHICLES

Sir,
Thanks you for drawing to everyone's attention the menace of skip lorries and other large vehicles on our country roads. It seems that the bigger the lorry, the less care and attention they pay to other motorists.

I can't count the number of times I've proceeded cautiously around a blind bend only to find a huge lorry thundering towards me in the middle of the road. It really is time that the employers of these drivers made them show more consideration for other drivers.

Ben Keene
Cheltenham

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THE PETER WYTON POEMS

GREASY SPOON

A kind of café difficult to find in these aseptic times.
Stiff plastic, gingham-patterned tablecloths,
Adorned with condiments the size of hand grenades.

A view outside obscured by grey net-curtaining,
Whose corrugated folds appear to have remained
Unaltered since the fall of Dien Bien Phu.

Linoleum, genuine primordial linoleum,
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Into a colour scheme not easily traceable
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BAR CODE BLUES

Appropriately, in a town called Troy,
a supermarket cashier from Ohio
ran the first bar code past a scanner.
The swiper might have been a girl or boy.

Who knows? Who cares? The fortress fell,
every consumable in the entire world
is now in uniform, rectangular,
black-and-white vertical striped hell.

Soon they'll be coding babies in the womb,
they'll be on the flanks of wild animals,
including zebras. There'll be one
on your coffin as they scan you to your tomb.

• Peter Wyton works in the pharmacy of Gloucestershire Royal Hospital by day, but is also a popular performance poet who regularly celebrates the Cotswolds in his work. He also gives presentations to groups such as Probus, W.I. and U3A in the area. He can be contacted at peterwyton@hotmail.com



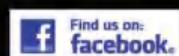
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Cycle mania

I tweeted a photo of Oxfordshire County Council's road sign and the online Cycle Nazis pounced

I got in a lot of online trouble recently for angering cyclists. Now trust me, you really don't want to anger cyclists - behind their healthy, clean-living, save the earth image lie a core of unbelievably angry human beings. I'd not experienced such venom since I once made the mistake of mentioning in print that Sir Paul McCartney might be a tad dull.

Life as professional troll, Katie Hopkins, must be very tough. It almost makes me feel sympathetic to the hideous old trout - almost.

The weird thing is that it really wasn't my intention to go for cyclists. I'd tweeted about the road sign that you see when you crawl into Oxford from Witney along the A40. It smugly informs you that the utter gridlock that you are experiencing is "likely to last until Nov 2016." I went mental and started to ask Oxfordshire County Council on Twitter whether this was some sort of prank? I tweeted a photo of the sign in question and the online Cycle Nazis pounced. Despite having taken the photo as a passenger in the car and while we were at a complete standstill, the bipedal brigade were quick to start accusing me of being a murderer on four wheels. "Someone should report you to the police..." said one hairless pedaller. "It's drivers like you that are responsible for cyclists dying..." whinged another. The worst was one that sent me an article about some poor kid who had been knocked off his bike and killed - "I presume this gives you a warm and fuzzy feeling?" asked the Lycra loony.

I'm not one to hold back online and so gave as good as I got... and better. This meant my entire weekend was spent fighting single-issue bully bores over a subject that I had almost zero interest in.



Dom Joly
@domjoly



Seriously- how can it take 16 months to fix a roundabout @OxfordshireCC



6 I didn't want to offend anyone, that's really not my style...

My only real beef with cyclists are with the groups who use the lane that goes past my farm as some sort of mini Tour de France every weekend. Not only do they weave across the narrow lane incredibly dangerously but worse - they talk incredibly loudly and snatches of their mind-blowingly inane conversations constantly drift into my garden like a foul aural odour. Obviously could sort this out pretty quickly with the aid of a crossbow but the police have advised me that this is illegal, which came as a total surprise to me.

I will now have the first half of that last sentence quoted out of context - as though

a serious threat - and will have another weekend ruined. This is why I really should just go off-grid. Life would be so much easier, so infinitely calmer if I didn't have every nutter in the country a simple click away from letting me know what he/she/it thinks. But I can't. I love the internet and all the weird and wonderful things it brings me. How would I have managed to harass Oxfordshire County Council in the old days? I would have been forced to send them menacing, anonymous letters dipped in pig's blood. As it is, they got back to me straight away and tried to justify their taking longer to "improve" a roundabout than it took to build the Pentagon. And they didn't stop there. Some lady contacted me and suggested that she set up a meeting between the council and myself in some pub in Oxford. "They can talk you

through their plans and explain why they are doing what they are doing," she said.

Personally, I can't think of anything duller than an evening with a bunch of traffic planners from a county council, but I didn't want to be rude and so I tried to be facetious by suggesting that I would be fine to meet up but that we would have to make the actual time of the meeting incredibly flexible - "because of the traffic..." She didn't get the hint (or maybe she did?) and wrote back very sweetly suggesting that I cycle in? I declined the kind offer on the grounds that I live over 50 miles away from the city and not because I am not a fan of cycling. After all, I didn't want to offend anyone, that's really not my style... ■

twitter @domjoly

Hear more from Dom in next month's magazine

A promotional poster for the Orchard St. Food & Craft Market. The background features two women in summer fashion. One woman stands on the left, wearing a blue and white patterned suit and a large tan tote bag. The other woman sits on the right, wearing a white shirt, a patterned skirt, and a colorful beaded necklace. They are in a waterfront setting with buildings and a boat in the background.

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Let there be light

One of the thing that really bugs me is people who moan all the time.

So here are the things that really irritate me!

Generally speaking I'd like to think that I'm a very positive person. I tend to look for the positives and not dwell on the negatives.

HOWEVER, occasionally one needs to have a bit of a moan. Since I've yet to be invited to appear on the BBC's *Room 101* television program, I shall take advantage of this column and get a few things off my chest. Please bear with me. And you should know that these are not the state of world affairs types of complaints. These are the little things that, encountered on a regular basis, bug me.

1 My first complaint is aimed at magazines such as this (Note to the editor: Please fix this, Mike?) when they show us pages and pages of glorious houses in the property section and some of them feature the intensely annoying POA instead of the asking price. They tell you how many bedrooms, bathrooms, they even tell you if there's gas central heating, but that crucial piece of information, how much it would actually cost to buy, is tantalisingly omitted. The excuse, so I'm told, is that if you need to ask the price, then you can't afford it, but that's just plain silly. There really can't be many people in this world where price is no object and for the rest of us who are not looking to buy a house but are just nosy parkers (the majority of your readers, Mike). It's a bit like a joke without a punch line.

2 Overhead lighting. The ubiquitous downlight is so very much in fashion at the moment it seems that no house or restaurant is without a few dozen of the blighters. What appears to have been ignored is that whilst they make the room look very attractive, the same cannot be said for the people occupying said room. Having worked as a model, an actress and a photographer, I can tell you on good authority, that overhead lighting is extremely unflattering. It's one of the ways



they light horror films, for goodness sake. And heaven forbid if you're unfortunate enough to have thinning hair. There's a marvellous story, quite possibly an urban myth, that Barbra Streisand once attended a party in Hollywood, noted that the only lighting was from overhead sources and immediately left.

3 This should probably be included as a sub-heading of point 2, but it's so annoying that I'm going to give it a category all by itself. Downlights over make-up (or shaving) mirrors. What are those highly paid designers *thinking*? So many powder rooms and hotel bathrooms make the very important task of checking one's make-up virtually impossible. Unless you were getting yourself ready for a role in a horror film, of course, in which case, Bingo! Good to go.

4 Hotels that don't have electrical outlets by the bed for you to plug your phone into. When we get back to our rooms at night, our phones will need charging (thanks, Apple) and beside the bed is where we want our phones to be as they charge. I once did a job that involved staying at a number of hotels in the same

chain around the UK and since all their rooms were identical, without even a bedside lamp that could be sacrificed for the cause, I had to travel with a bulky extension cord. A crucial hotel room design flaw multiplied thousands of times in the many hundreds of hotels that this chain has around the UK. I wonder if Lenny Henry also travels with his own extension cord..?

5 Still on the subject of hotels: I've noticed an alarming trend in the use of frosted glass in bathroom doors. I've even encountered clear glass and once (oh the horror) no door at all. More often than not I'm alone in a hotel room, but if one were on a romantic get-away, I can't think of anything less romantic than... well, you get the picture.

6 Supermarkets that move things around. You're in a hurry (who has time for a leisurely stroll around a supermarket?), you know what you want and where it is, until some bright spark at head office decides to totally alienate you, his loyal customer, by putting things in different places. And just to add to your confusion, there's usually a degree of lag time before they change the overhead signs. You become disorientated, ticked-off and late for your next appointment. Thanks.

I'm going to stop now. I could go on, of course, but one of the things that bugs me and I mean really bugs me is people who moan all the time.

Turn to page 140

To read about Emma's first radio play, on BBC Radio Gloucestershire soon.

twitter @EmmaSamms1

Hear more from Emma in next month's magazine



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It's *child's play* for Julian

Comedian and novelist Julian Clary - who has turned campness and innuendo into an art-form - has written his first book for children. The *Bolds* tells the story of a family of hyenas, who disguise themselves as humans and move to Teddington. Interesting... says Katie Jarvis

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: EDDIE BOTSIO

Bath Children's Literature Festival, September 25-October 4

Here are my worries.

There's a passage in Julian Clary's autobiography (yes, yes; there are lots of passages in it, which accounts for its title; look it up) where he describes an interview with a *Guardian* journalist. Despite the fact that he's delightfully friendly and chatty with her - **even makes her sandwiches**

(filling unspecified) - the piece he subsequently reads in the paper dubs him 'exotically packaged mediocrity'. "The only hint I'd had that she was capable of such bad taste was the earrings she wore, which looked like salvage from a recent car crash," Julian writes. "*Dogs Today* were far more amiable..."

NB to self: Remember to claim I'm from *Horse & Hound*; not to wear earrings; and, in extremis, to refuse all sandwiches.

Then there are the - *you know* - naughty jokes and risqué humour that could crop up inappropriately in our conversation, when this is a piece based around a book for children. ►



Julian Clary with his new book, The Bolds

NB to self: Remember that this interview could be read by the vulnerable, ie former Chancellors of the Exchequer and very young people...

Extra NB to self: Avoid unintentionally suspect questions such as, 'How are things down your end, Julian?'

And then, to prepare for the interview (which turns out to be by phone, a relief in the earring-department), I read *The Bolds*. And a whole (with a 'w') new Julian Clary emerges! Because it is delightful: very (appropriately) funny (the bottom jokes are mainly confined to rubbings on garden gates); original; beautifully illustrated by David Roberts, featuring crocs with huge teeth, laughing hyenas in hats, and pages that darken at night. And perfectly pitched for its audience, with chatty lines ("Telling lies is NEVER a good idea. I once told my friends that I was a sausage roll.") and Christmas-cracker jokes: Where do baby monkeys sleep? Ape-ri-cots!

But, as I read, I'm intrigued by a particular aspect. Here is Julian Clary, writing about an unusual family. A family of hyenas from Africa, who dress up in human shorts and shirts and sun-hats, and move to 41 Fairfield Road, Teddington, Middlesex. Who love the new world they find themselves in but are constantly afraid of being unmasked: "Tuck your tail out of the way, for goodness' sake! It's peeking out the bottom of your shorts. That would give the game away." Who try to fit in with those around them, despite their obvious differences; but who cope with this strange life through humour, plenty of jokes and copious amounts of laughter.

So, Julian Clary, who crossed-dressed his Action Man from the age of five; who was called a queer and a homo by the school bullies; who went on to become a famous comedian; and who grew up in Teddington, Middlesex... Are there any parallels here?

"That's very ingenious!" he says, in a rather nice, well-modulated voice - far less theatrical than his shows might lead you to believe.

Really? I mean, I'm not trying to replace Anthony Clare, but...

"Well, I've always thought - and I suppose it comes out in whatever you're writing - that laughter is a very good coping mechanism. It sounds like a cliché but that's how I got through my school days. They were fairly grim, but we did have a laugh about it...

"And it's sort of a camp device as well, to trivialise things; so I suppose I'll go along with your theory. Truth always comes out in writing."

We've started well - neither of us has in any way alluded to my costume-jewellery

yet - but I haven't quite finished. Because the other thing that intrigued me was the family-focus within the *Bolds*. There are the parents Spot and Sue, who change their names to Fred and Amelia (presumably on the basis that 'Spot' would stand out in a constituency that ousted Vince Cable), and twins Bobby and Betty. If I'd guessed, I'd have thought he'd have chosen a very different kind of family from mum, dad, brother and sister.

"My family was conventional. And the house I'm picturing the *Bolds* in was the house I grew up in in Teddington." He pauses and quizzes me, "So you'd imagine I'd have gay parents in the book?"

Sort of yes and sort of no, I guess. On the 'no' side, he always writes about his own 'conventional' parents, Peter and Brenda, with warmth and love. His relationship with them has clearly been easy and open: he even managed to elicit from his mother details of his own conception, one morning ("Brazen as you please. Anyone could have walked in. Where were my sisters?") during

6 If you'd asked me as a child what I wanted to do, I'd have said writing. And so would other people, probably. I wasn't that funny and I wasn't that extrovert

a late-summer break in 1958 at Auntie Flossie's bungalow in Clacton-on-Sea.

He muses for a moment. "I think it's that thing where you either write about extraordinary people in an ordinary situation, or the other way round. Sort of a rule of sitcom, isn't it? And my way of doing it is to have a very ordinary situation but extraordinary people [ie hyenas] living within it. It's just my experience of life, I think.

"My parents, on the surface - a probation officer and a policeman; Catholic - were very straight-laced and above-board; but, actually, they're very unusual and liberal and outrageous in their own way. But isn't everyone?"

(Bear that question in mind; we'll come back to it.)

"They gave me a good outlook on life. They're both 84 now but they're good at enjoying themselves and ploughing on and laughing. They've got various ailments that they can barely tell me about because they're too busy being amused by each other's."

Fair enough. This is clearly the moment where I either forge a new career based on NLP or move on in the interview. Which is what I do. It wasn't his idea to write a children's book, he tells me, but the brainwave of his agent. He's written a series of successful adult novels and thought he might embark on another, "But part of the problem, when comedians become writers, is that it's very difficult to be taken seriously. The literary world is a little bit sniffy, whereas all that's gone with children's literature. It doesn't have that sort of weight on its shoulders."

The minute he sat down to write about the *Bolds* - in his Kentish house that's haunted by the ghost of former owner Noël Coward - the words just flowed. He's written the sequel already and has another eight in mind. "I've got a vision of a whole row of *Bolds* books on my shelf."

It feels more natural than anything Julian has done yet. "If you'd asked me as a child what I wanted to do, I'd have said writing. And so would other people, probably. I wasn't that funny and I wasn't that extrovert."

In fact, he didn't read much children's literature, growing up. He can remember the odd foray into *Swallows and Amazons*; "and I remember a book about a Chinese boy but it wasn't famous. I didn't really like Enid Blyton, but I was reading Thomas Hardy and George Eliot - those big, thick books - from about 11 or 12. I didn't have that many friends so it was such a reassuring thing, to be able to escape into a book."

So let's return to that quote about everyone being "very unusual and liberal and outrageous in their own way". Because, if Julian's life proves anything, it doesn't prove that. Read one way, his autobiography is very funny - light-hearted, outrageous fun; an easy passage (there we go again) into the world of gay bars and make-up for men; of camp humour and innuendo that launched a glittering career.

But underneath, it's also a tale of homophobic bullying, gay-bashing (genuinely violently so, at times), prejudice, Valium, panic-attacks and depression. And there are the deeply-moving scenes in which he cared for his partner, Christopher, as he succumbed to the AIDS virus in the 1990s. Julian is uncompromising, not only in describing the dreadful physical symptoms that Christopher heroically endured, but the emotional fall-out, too: "The last night he kept trying to tell me something and I kept trying to understand. It went on for hours and in the end I did something rather ►

unsuitable for the occasion. I pretended I understood, just to give him some peace... But I feel bad about it now."

But when I ask Julian once again about the bullying, he brushes it off - despite his earlier comments about his 'grim' school days. "It wasn't awful; it wasn't important. And it's the same as when Christopher was dying; his way of coping was laughing. You might as well laugh as not. I don't like life to be too tragic."

Does he think of himself as a pioneer? Somebody who helped pave the way for same-sex marriage, for example, by changing attitudes?

No, he says; he was just being himself. But: "Life is ever so different, isn't it! You sometimes meet straight young men who, a generation ago, would have been a little bit wary. They're not now - it's straight-forward. The younger gay generation are not damaged in a way that earlier generations were. They're very self-righteous about life and what they're entitled to, which I think is healthy. It's all very healthy now. They haven't been through the hard times."

Do they appreciate that?

"I think they do. Maybe some of them don't. But I think it's just an interesting way things have evolved. Because I had such a hard time at school [another slight contradiction, but I'm beginning to understand why], I can see why I arranged my life as I did - because I needed to be liked. You become a performer, and you particularly become a comedian, because you need that constant reassurance that life is actually OK."

Life has, indeed, changed. And *The Bolds* is dedicated to the very latest generation - his great nephews and nieces. He must be the coolest great-uncle ever.

"They're all quite young, still - between the ages of 18 months and eight. But I certainly don't think my own nephews and nieces, who are now grown up, ever saw me as cool. If you're a schoolboy and you've got a renowned homosexual as an uncle, it might have been a bit difficult."

He does love children (one of his revelations is that he nearly became a father himself, during a conventional love affair with an unnamed woman), and particularly entertaining them. During his various festival appearances, he'll be reading from his books while David Roberts draws pictures, which will appear live on a big screen. "Getting a laugh from a roomful of children is the same thrill as getting laughs from adults. The idea is to whet their appetite; to tell them a story while they get the added drawings by David happening before their very eyes.



The Bolds, illustration by David Roberts

6 His parents now live in Swindon: 'It's not quite what we'd hoped for, but they're very settled there now'

"And David absolutely is the right choice of illustrator for me. He gets it all completely, and that adds a whole new dimension. It was so exciting, getting all the drawings through."

He's slightly worried, he says, that he'll disgrace himself (with inappropriate jokes - though this, in itself, is a joke) - but it will be familiar territory geographically, at least. While his great-grandmother hailed from a farm in Chipping Norton, his parents now live in Swindon: "It's not quite what we'd hoped for, but they're very settled there now."

Life for Julian, on the other hand, rotates between frantic activities - panto in Birmingham this Christmas, touring next spring, writing another *Bolds* book - and being quiet at home in Kent with the dogs and the chickens. There's Valerie, the black, whippet cross, who's 16 and suffering from canine dementia. "It's a full-time job,

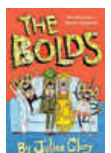
I tell you. She's wandering round the house now, not sure where she is or where she's going. But she's not too distressed by it as long as I'm around to lead her into the right room." And Albert, a Jack Russell crossed with a Staffy. "He's a bit of a geezer: six years old and ginger, but he's very sweet with Valerie - keeps an eye on her."

A busy life, then, juggling all those strands. "Yes, but I wouldn't like to do just one thing. They're all a means to the same end, I suppose. Ways of expressing myself. You kind of turn yourself into a product, don't you? It's all about me, really: writing about myself, or being on stage, or mining my own experiences to turn into anecdotes."

Exactly. Such as a family of hyenas, who love their life; who hide their secrets and differences with jokes and laughter. ■

Julian Clary is appearing on October 4 at 1.45pm at the Guildhall, Bath as part of the Telegraph Bath Children's Literature Festival. www.bathfestivals.org.uk; 01225 463362. You can also catch him at The Times and The Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival; Cheltenhamfestivals.com

The Bolds by Julian Clary, illustrated by David Roberts, is published by Andersen Press, price £6.99





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To see how a renewable heating system can make the whole family happy, email alice.whitefield@ecovision.co.uk for more information or visit www.ecovision.co.uk



Professional property sleuthing

Most property searches start on the internet. Linda Jeffcoat of Stacks Property Search shares some expert browsing knowledge

Some inside knowledge is useful when browsing property portals. You can glean a great deal from drilling down, looking at what isn't included as well as what is, and knowing what the jargon means.

Images:

- Start with what's missing! No internals means that the property needs substantial updating
- If all the lights are on, the property is probably challenged in the natural light department.
- Assume the photographer has used a wide angled lens. Check different angles of the same room for a more realistic view.
- Look at the way the external images have been cropped. If the cropping is close on one or both sides, there's probably something there they'd rather you didn't see. And if the front elevation shows little frontage, the chances are it's pretty close to the road. Google Earth and Google Streetview are your essential next steps to confirm the reality.
- Don't discount ugly property - if an unattractive property meets all your requirements apart from beauty, give it a chance and go and have a look. Of all the things to compromise on, it's one of the least important. There's a strong chance

that that you'll be pleasantly surprised, and even if not, there are many ways of improving the appearance of the exterior.

Description:

- Beware association with a prized location - the words 'near' or 'close to' are often used to raise the game of a property that isn't necessarily very well located. Always go to the map to establish exactly where a property is located.
- 'Newly developed' or 'newly refurbished' isn't a guarantee of quality. Look carefully at the pictures to give you an idea of how well the work has been done, paying particular attention to windows, flooring, kitchens and bathrooms. These will give you a good idea of the standard to which the work has been carried out.
- Generally, bear in mind that 'pretty garden' means it's not substantial.
- If the description says 'around ½ acre', it might be much less. If you're buying a property with ground, it's sensible to ask the agent for a land plan or a Promap.

Floorplan:

The element of the property brochure that often holds the most information is the floor plan. From it you can see whether the layout works for you in its current form, whether it has the potential to be improved

or adapted, and how it interacts with the outside space. Pay attention to windows and doors, and restricted head heights.

Which portals to use:

When property portals were shiny and new, it was easy, there were only a couple to keep on top of. Now there are so many more. My advice would be to spend some time setting up customised property alerts on Rightmove, Onthemarket and Zoopla at the least - time spent drawing your own search criteria is time well spent. As soon as anything new comes on it will appear in your inbox.

But remember, portals are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to property search. It doesn't completely replace traditional methods, and if you're serious about buying, you will need to have good relationships with all the agents in the area. Or by using a search agent you can be sure you won't miss anything, and you'll also get to hear about property before it comes onto the market, or property that is never advertised in the press or on the portals.



Linda Jeffcoat, regional director of Stacks Property Search in South Oxfordshire and North Wiltshire (tel: 01672 540927). email: lindajeffcoat@stacks.co.uk or visit www.stacks.co.uk

A perfect preservation

Plundered in 1642 by King Charles I's army, part of the local farming scene for well over 400 years and now fully restored to its former glory by the current owners, Hoarstone Manor Farm is quite a property to behold.

The seven-bedroom farmhouse which sits within 1.15 acres of land on the outskirts of Bewdley is currently on the market with offers over £765,000 being invited. The selling agents, Nock

Deighton, have described the property as a perfect example of how the preservation of an historical house can be intertwined with modern living to create the quintessential family home.

Not only does Hoarstone Manor Farm provide an exceptional journey back in time but it also offers an impressive family home with excellent commutability, being just on the outskirts of the



Georgian town of Bewdley. With tasteful décor throughout, complementary of the exquisite character, and spacious living

accommodation set over two storeys, a true family feel has been created. The bedrooms are all generously sized, and every room in the house boasts individual charisma and charm. Whether imbedded with the exclusivity of wood panelling, an original fire place or stone mullion windows, there is really something about Hoarstone Manor Farm house that makes it like no other.

Call Nock Deighton on 01746 762666, or visit www.nockdeighton.co.uk



position, position, position
make sure your agent features your property in Cotswold Life magazine



Spacious in Slad

A beautifully presented and spacious detached family house situated in the sought after village of Slad and close to the busy market town of Stroud

Where: Slad, Gloucestershire.

What: Chessed is thought to have been built in the early 1900s and then extended over the years. The current owners have occupied the property for over 30 years, improving and updating throughout, providing beautifully presented, spacious accommodation for today's modern family living.

Inside: The accommodation comprises entrance hall, double-aspect drawing room, dining room, open plan kitchen/breakfast/family room, utility,

31' conservatory, cloakroom, four double bedrooms, four en suite shower/bathrooms.

Outside: Detached double garage with planning for conversion into a two-bedroom cottage, heated pool with changing room, beautifully landscaped gardens, outbuilding/stable, ample parking and panoramic views.

How much: £995,000.

Find out more... Contact Murrays Estate Agents on 01452 814655.



The *high life*

An impressive Cotswold stone house in an outstanding position

Where: W
Dursley, Gloucestershire.

What: Tedcombe is an extended Cotswold stone family house in an elevated position, with fabulous views over a secluded wooded valley.

Inside: Built of natural Cotswold stone under a clay tiled roof, the property offers fantastic refurbished family accommodation arranged over two floors and extending to approximately 3,500 sq ft. Accommodation includes four

reception rooms, four bathrooms, and five bedrooms. An annexe, currently used for holiday lets, comprises living room, kitchen, double bedroom and bathroom.

Outside: A gravel drive leads from the bottom of the valley to a parking area and double garage. There is also stabling, a paddock and outbuildings. Around four acres in total.

How much: Guide price of £1.25 million.

Find out more... Call Knight Frank on 01285 659771.





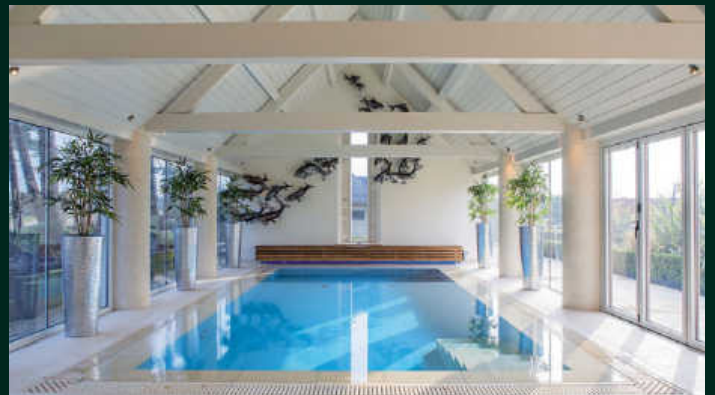
Long Compton

An impressive 6 bedroom village house sitting in 0.92 acre

Chipping Norton 4 miles, Stratford-upon-Avon 16 miles, Oxford 21 miles

A substantial Grade II Listed former Rectory surrounded by just under an acre of attractive gardens and grounds located in the North Cotswold village of Long Compton. 4 reception rooms, 6 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. Outbuildings, formal gardens and lawned garden. In all about 0.92 acres.

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Nr Bibury

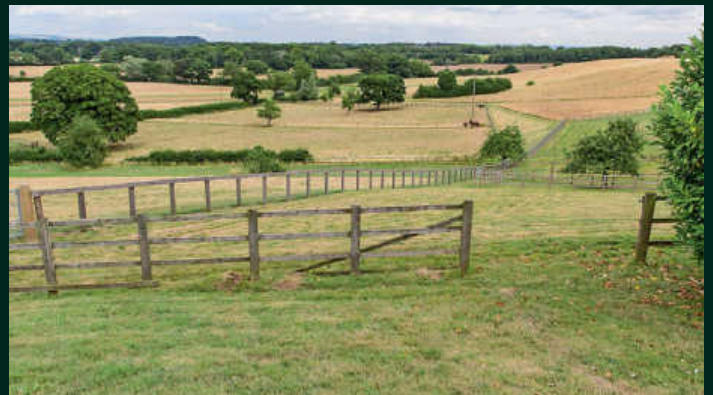
Cutting edge design

Cirencester 4.5 miles, Kemble (London Paddington 90 mins) 8 miles, M4 (J15) 21 miles

Finished to the highest possible standard and situated at the head of a long drive with distant Cotswold views offering privacy, security and seclusion. Hall, 3 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, cinema room, 5 bedrooms, dressing room, 4 bathrooms. Indoor leisure complex, large storage barn. Scandinavian lodge. Beautiful gardens and grounds. In all about 11.5 acres. EPC: E

KnightFrank.co.uk/Cirencester
rupert.sturgis@knightfrank.com
01285 367721

KnightFrank.co.uk/country
peter.edwards@knightfrank.com
020 7861 1707



Eldersfield

Outstanding equestrian facilities with classic farmhouse

Ledbury 10 miles, M5 (J11) 16 miles, Cheltenham 20 miles

Situated in a beautiful location at the end of a no-through lane, a ring-fenced farm with an excellent range of equestrian facilities. Indoor arena with Martin Collins' waxed surface, Olympic size outdoor arena, 7 furlong grass gallop, 19 boxes, associated facilities and groom's flat. Period farmhouse with 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms and an annex set in an elevated position in the middle of its own land. In all about 108 acres.

Guide price: £1,850,000

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[onTheMarket.com](https://www.onthemarket.com)



Foxhill

Immaculate Cotswold stone property with exceptional south facing views

Bourton-on-the-Water 2 miles, Northleach 3 miles, Oxford 32 miles

A beautifully presented country residence situated down a long private tarmac driveway and surrounded by open countryside. 4 reception rooms, 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. Wine cellar, larder and storage. Secondary kitchen and summer dining room, cinema. Double carport, workshop, parking, landscaped gardens and terraces. In all about 0.42 acres.

Guide price: £1,950,000
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Cowley

A substantial listed barn set in an elevated position with panoramic views

Cheltenham 4.5 miles, M5 (JJA) 6 miles, Cirencester 10 miles

Dining hall, sitting room, drawing room, games room, kitchen, study, utility room, cloakroom and ground floor bath/shower room. Master bedroom with en-suite and walk-in wardrobe, 4 further bedrooms each with en-suites. Large garage, ample gated parking, lawned level gardens, large Cotswold stone outbuilding and paddocks. In all about 2.1 acres.

Guide price £1,495,000
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tom.banwell@knightfrank.com
01242 246959
rupert.sturgis@knightfrank.com
01285 659771



Moreton-in-Marsh

Detached 4 bedroom house with secondary accommodation

Stow-on-the-Wold 6 miles, Cheltenham 22 miles, Oxford 26 miles

A characterful and imaginative conversion of a Grade II Listed Cotswold stone barn and associated buildings, which provides a light and spacious home and extensive ancillary accommodation. 4 reception rooms, 4 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, 3 shower rooms and 1 dressing room. Ancillary accommodation comprising 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, gymnasium/office. In all about 2.64 acres.

Offers in excess of: £1,000,000
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Uley

Below a wooded escarpment with fabulous views

Dursley 3 miles, Tetbury 7 miles, Bristol 25 miles

A modern Cotswold stone family house in a fabulous rural setting. Hall, 2 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Double garage, cabin/home office. Garden and paddock. In all just under 2 acres. EPC rating D.

[KnightFrank.co.uk/Cirencester](https://www.knightfrank.co.uk/Cirencester)
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01285 367721

Guide price: £750,000
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COTTAGES IN THE COTSWOLDS



Guide price: £875,000

Bibury

A handsome Grade II Listed Cotswold stone village house with potential annex. 3 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, side hall, 5 double bedrooms, study/bedroom 6, 3 bathrooms. Integral garage, parking and gardens.

rupert.marchington@knightfrank.com

Cirencester: **01285 367721**



Guide price £395,000

Gretton

A beautiful Cotswold cottage in a village location close to Winchcombe. Sitting room, dining room, kitchen and utility room/cloakroom. 3 bedrooms and family bathroom. Pretty gardens. EPC Rating D.

tom.banwell@knightfrank.com

Cheltenham: **01242 246959**



Offers in excess of £475,000

Sutton-under-Brailes

A beautiful double fronted Cotswold stone cottage combining modern living with characterful features in Cotswold countryside on the Oxfordshire/Warwickshire border. 3 reception rooms, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Garden and roof terrace. EPC Rating: E

leigh.glazebrook@knightfrank.com

Stow: **01451 600610**



Guide price: 465,000

North Littleton

Substantial farmhouse on the edge of the Cotswolds. 2 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, master bedroom suite with en suite bathroom, 4 further bedrooms, 2 further bathrooms, garden, garage.

william.ward-jones@knightfrank.com

Stratford: **01789 297735**

The summer holiday period is a busy one for Knight Frank. Buyers are using their spare time to search the internet on their mobile phones and laptops to find the perfect property, wherever they are in the world. It has been a very busy summer and in this region alone sales are up by 23% on the same period 2014.

To find out how we can help you please contact us today:

Cheltenham 01242 246959

Cirencester 01285 367721

Stow-on-the-Wold 01451 600610

Stratford-upon-Avon 01789 297735

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SOLD

Middlely Lypiatt
Guide price: £2,500,000



SOLD

Edgeworth
Guide price: £2,950,000



SOLD

Ampney Knowle
Guide price: £9,000,000



SOLD

Beverston
Guide price: £1,500,000

SCORCHING SUMMER RESULTS

The local market has been strong this summer, we have exchanged on 65% more property in 2015 than in the same period last year. Our success is down to honest advice, good preparation and access to buyers via our 9 local offices, 29 London offices, 68 national offices and our international network of 370 offices.

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SOLD

Winstone
Guide price: £970,000



SOLD

Upper Kilcott
Guide price: £1,380,000



SOLD

Chedworth
Guide price: £995,000



SOLD

Westonbirt
Guide price: £515,000



SOLD

Aldsworth
Guide price: £695,000



SOLD

Easton Grey
Guide price: £499,950

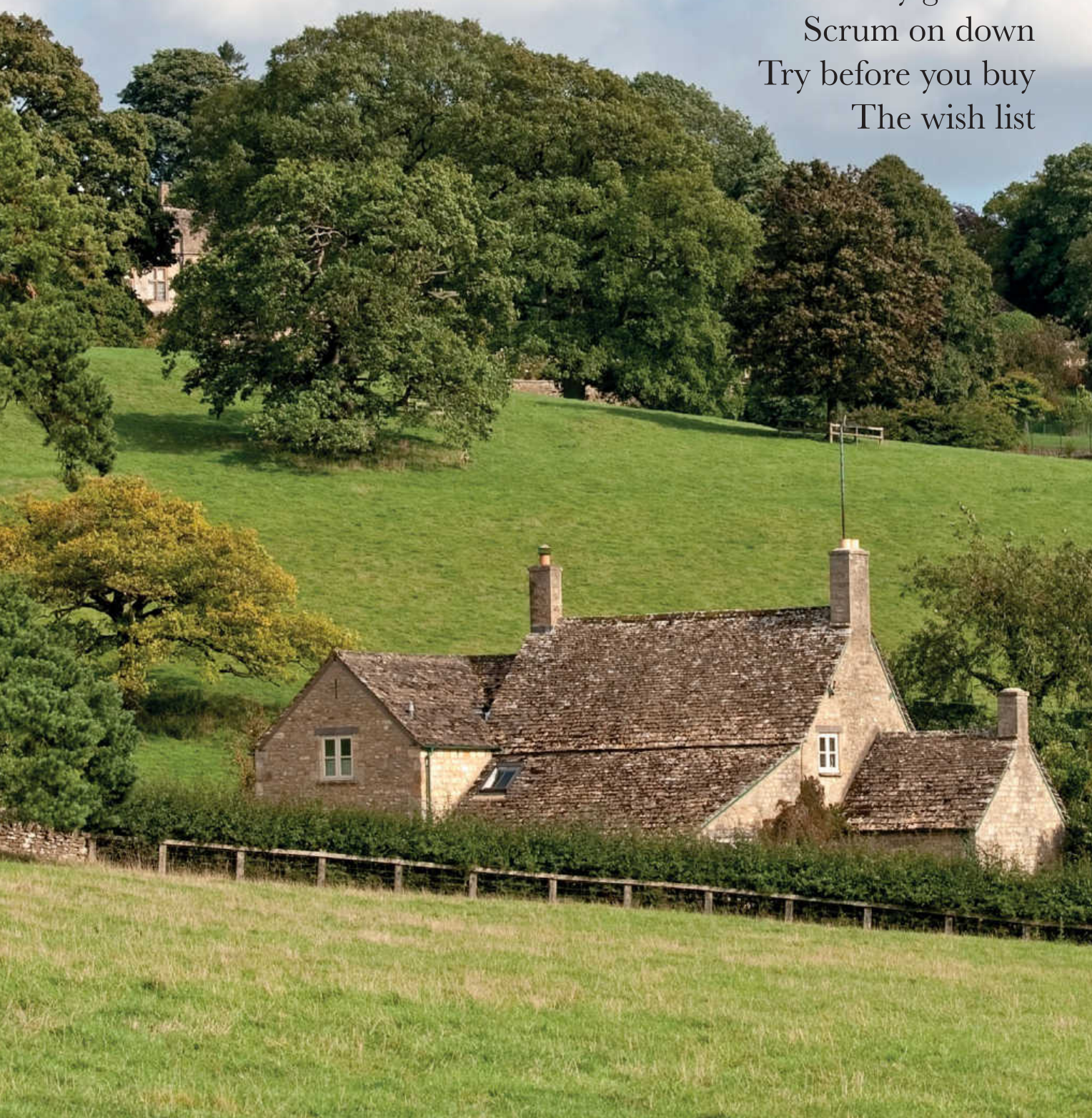
IMPRESSIVE RESULTS CIRENCESTER OFFICE

Country *View*

By Knight Frank

Advertisement Feature

The hot list
Country gardens
Scrum on down
Try before you buy
The wish list



Welcome

*Welcome to this latest Knight Frank edition of Country View,
our look at the property goings on around the country.*

It's been an interesting few months, with the main event being the surprise election result. The nation as a whole seems to be getting used to the idea of a period of stability and we are already seeing the calming effects on what has been a somewhat turbulent property market in recent times.

In our country offices, we are recording an increase in the proportion of buyers cashing in on prime London price rises and moving out to the commuter belt and beyond. Exactly where they choose to buy obviously dictates how far their budget will stretch. Around £1m, for example, will secure you a former estate with seven acres in West Gloucestershire or a detached family home on the outskirts of Guildford. With part- and full-time home working on the increase, it's an exodus that only looks set to grow.

On the lettings side, the post-election effect has coincided with the market's busiest time of the year, so our offices have been in full swing. Again, the influx from London renters is driving a significant proportion of activity, with families

looking to move and settle in before the start of another school year. The quality of life, excellent schools and relatively fast commuting times all continue to be big draws, particularly in the Home Counties, and for some renting is an opportunity to try out an area before buying (see more on this later).

Feeling tempted? Read on to see some of our featured properties currently available through our network of offices – for a complete list, please contact your local Knight Frank team.

In what's going to be a huge year for UK rugby fans, we've done a tour of the country to pick the top spots that will put you within a drop goal of some top-class rugby. We've also looked at the increasingly popular strategy of renting before buying – a chance to check-out a new location before committing to a move.

We hope you enjoy this latest instalment of Country View and look forward to catching up with you again in our next edition.

Christopher Dewe
Country Sales

Gordon Hood
Country Lettings

The hot list

3 properties under £1 million



Wallingford, Oxfordshire. Guide price: £499,950
Knight Frank Henley, sales 01491 738001



Kingstone, Herefordshire. Guide price: £565,000
Knight Frank Hereford, sales 01432 367064

*An oak-beamed
cottage, a Georgian gem,
an elegant country house – all
of them exuding timeless charm;
all of them under £1 million.*

*Three shining examples of
our selection of beautiful and
surprisingly affordable out
of town homes.*



Ancrum, Roxburghshire. Guide price: £575,000
Knight Frank Lauder, sales 01578 416991

Wildly

It's one of the joys of owning a country home — beautiful gardens with mature trees, hidden corners and local wildlife. The trick is knowing how to enjoy all that green space without being a slave to it. For some, the answer is a wild flower garden.

attractive

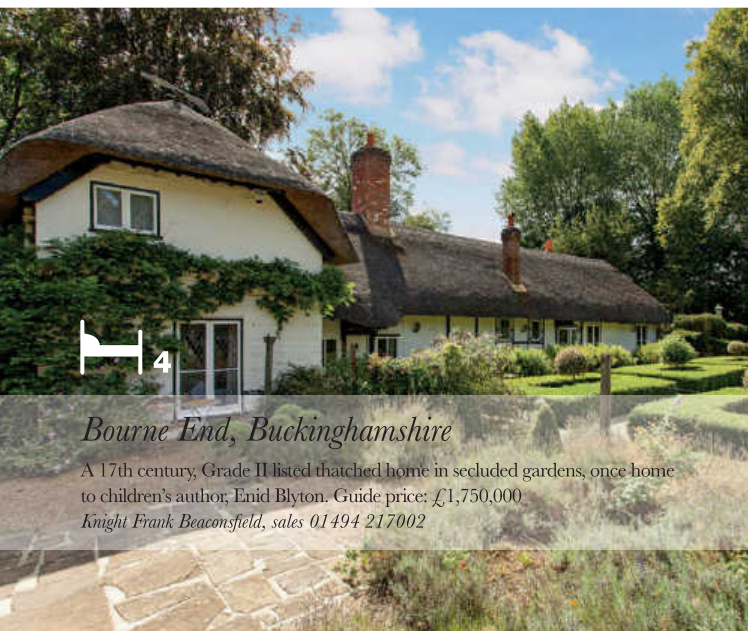
country gardens

A movement that's taking root...

A quick glance at the property pages shows that it's a growing trend. Increasing numbers of covetable country homes are coming to market with a touch of wilderness in their grounds.

In previous years where the Georgian rectory might have been bracketed by formal lawns and pea shingle pathways, now there's a good chance that it will feel a lot more organic in its horticultural approach, with hip-high grasses, wild flowers and meandering mown paths cutting through them.

Of course, you can do both. Larger properties will often feature formal gardens surrounding the house, with mixed planting as you move further out and a wild flower meadow extending to the boundary of the land and encircling features such as lakes and woods.



4

Bourne End, Buckinghamshire

A 17th century, Grade II listed thatched home in secluded gardens, once home to children's author, Enid Blyton. Guide price: £1,750,000
Knight Frank Beaconsfield, sales 01494 217002



3

Winstone, Near Cirencester

A beautifully presented detached period Cotswold stone cottage on the edge of a small village with a pretty, landscaped garden. Guide price: £575,000
Knight Frank Cirencester, sales 01285 367008



Chiddingfold, Surrey

A beautiful cottage in extensive private grounds.

Guide price: £1,200,000

Knight Frank Haslemere, sales 01428 784007



Near Leyburn, North Yorkshire

A spectacularly situated Dales farmhouse in 7 acres.

Offers in excess of: £495,000

Knight Frank Harrogate, sales 01423 578002



Littledown, Hampshire

Attractive listed cottage with wonderful gardens and views, and detailed planning to extend. Guide price: £1,395,000

Knight Frank Haverhill, sales 01438 498004



Near Meopham, Kent

A picturesque thatched house in delightful gardens.

Guide price: £1,325,000

Knight Frank Sevenoaks, sales 01732 658002



Swanmore, Hampshire

Overlooking the rolling Hampshire countryside.

Guide price: £750,000

Knight Frank Winchester, sales 01962 270004

Freedom of expression

The very nature of wild flower planting means that the designer has a great deal of freedom to express themselves – there are few hard and fast rules. And the wild garden's designer credentials were confirmed last year when renowned landscape artist Piet Oudolf created Oudolf Field for the uber-cool Hauser & Wirth Gallery in Somerset. This perennial meadow with its varied planting and swathes of winding pathway celebrates the informal approach on a grand scale.

However big or small the plot, that creative free rein is one of the inspiring things about wild flower planting. After all, with so many prime country homes being listed buildings or in conservation areas, the garden is the owner's sole chance to put their stamp on the outside of the property.

Maybe it is a sign of the times as formality falls out of fashion in every part of our lives, or perhaps it is a response to busy schedules. Whatever the reason for the growing popularity of wild flower planting, up and down the land it is bringing a taste of the true countryside even closer to home.

Scrum on *Down*

The eyes of the rugby world will be on the UK this autumn, so we thought we'd have a look at some of the best-loved clubs dotted around the country. If you're lucky enough to live close to any of them, we recommend heading along to catch a match. Or if spectating doesn't cut it, how about pulling on a shirt and running on yourself - most clubs also run a full complement of amateur sides from youngsters on up.



Bath Bath Rugby Club is one of the UK's oldest clubs, with a long history of amateur and professional success. It's also surely the most picturesque – The Rec is in the heart of Bath right on the riverside.



Farleigh Hungerford, Bath, Somerset

A beautiful thatched home with secondary accommodation. Located on the opposite side of the road to Farleigh House which is where Bath Rugby train. Guide price: £945,000

Knight Frank Bath, sales 01225 288012

London Irish Based in Sunbury on Thames, London Irish play all their home games at Reading's Madejski Stadium. The Avenue is 'The Exiles' impressive new training facility in Sunbury and where the club's amateur teams play their matches.



Eversley, Hampshire

A charming period house incorporating a self-contained annexe set in gardens and grounds of about 2.33 acres. Approximately 9.9 miles from the Madejski Stadium. Guide price: £1,500,000

Knight Frank Basingstoke, sales 01256 228010

Bishop's Stortford This National League 2 side has a loyal following in the Hertfordshire town, earning promotion in 2013. As well as senior teams, it also runs popular women's and junior team rugby.



Bishop's Stortford, Herts

Located in sought after St Michaels Mead estate, with well proportioned and light interiors and delightful views over the garden. Approximately 2.3 miles from the Bishop's Stortford Rugby Club. Guide price: £595,000

Knight Frank Bishop's Stortford, sales 01279 246003

Bristol Bristol's top rugby club shares a ground with Bristol City Football Club – the 21,000 capacity Ashton Gate Stadium. This RFU Championship side fields several former international players.



Dundry, Bristol, Somerset

A detached contemporary home in an elevated position enjoying far reaching views over open countryside and the city of Bristol, including Ashton Gate Stadium; home to Bristol Rugby. Guide price: £1,300,000

Knight Frank Bristol, sales 0117 295 0018

Gloucester The 'Cherry & Whites' are an Aviva Premiership side based at the 16,500 capacity Kingsholm Stadium. The club has enjoyed great success recently in Europe and in Sevens rugby.



South Newington, Oxfordshire

A stunning Oxfordshire farmhouse within easy reach of London, Oxford and excellent schooling. This property is approximately a one hour drive from Kingsholm Stadium. Guide price: £900,000

Knight Frank Oxford, sales 01865 360060

Worcester Warriors Now back in the Aviva Premiership after beating Bristol by 1 point last season, the Sixways Stadium hosts a calendar of well-attended British and European matches.



Near Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire

A charming Georgian three storey farmhouse with ancillary detached traditional red brick period cottage. Within 10 miles of Worcester Warriors Sixways rugby ground. Guide price: £875,000

Knight Frank Worcester, sales 01905 417772

Exeter Chiefs The Exeter Chiefs are an Aviva Premiership side based at Sandy Park on the outskirts of the city. Plans are afoot to extend the stadium to accommodate the crowds watching their European Challenge Cup matches.



St Leonards, Exeter, Devon

A spacious detached non-listed house on one of Exeter's most exclusive and historic crescents. Approximately 3.5 miles from Exeter Chiefs rugby ground. Guide price: £1,350,000

Knight Frank Exeter, sales 01392 248038

Wasps The Wasps name has been a rugby fixture for more than 100 years. Today, this Aviva Premiership side plays its home games to packed houses at the newly-acquired Ricoh Arena in Coventry.



Kenilworth, Warwickshire

A handsome period townhouse with light and spacious accommodation and landscaped garden. Facing Abbey Fields with views across parkland. Approximately 10 miles from Wasps rugby ground. Guide price: £675,000

Knight Frank Stratford upon Avon, sales 01789 229000





Few of us would buy a suit without trying it on or a car without a test drive, but every year thousands of us up-sticks and relocate to a new area in the hope that it's the right move for us and our families. Considering the costs and upheaval of getting it wrong and re-tracing our steps, it's quite a leap of faith. Which is why many choose to rent first and 'try before they buy'.



Ascot, Berkshire

Located within walking distance of Ascot racecourse is this stunning recently completed, first floor, two bedroom executive apartment to rent.

Guide price: £3,000 per calendar month

Knight Frank Ascot, lettings 01344 527641

Try before you Buy



Langley, Berkshire

This immaculately presented barn conversion sits in an idyllic location, with gated access and long driveway but still within easy reach of all local amenities and commuter links. Guide price: £3,999 per calendar month

Knight Frank Beaconsfield, lettings 01494 912898



Cobham, Surrey

Stunning refurbished coach house set in the exclusive Cobham Park. Nearby proximity to Stoke d'Abernon train station with services to London Waterloo in 40 minutes. Guide price: £3,500 per calendar month

Knight Frank Cobham, lettings 01932 964610



Weybridge, Surrey

Modern family home in a sought after location, offering ideal proximity to Walton Station, Outlands Parade and a good selection of schools; both private and state.

Guide price: £3,325 per calendar month

Knight Frank Esher, lettings 01372 434732



Haslemere, West Sussex

A beautiful family home finished to a very high standard, within the South Downs National Park with exceptional views and a southerly aspect. 56 mins to London Waterloo. Guide price: £4,500 per calendar month

Knight Frank Guildford, lettings 01483 665723

Renting before you buy is a sensible way to get a true feel for an area, the quality of life and how it will fit with your family's lifestyle. Here at Knight Frank it's a tactic that we most commonly associate with those moving out of Central London wanting to see how they'll cope without a Starbucks on every corner or with having to take a train to work rather than a tube.

Of course there are degrees of relocation. Moving to one of Surrey's commuter towns will not be as big a culture shock as cashing in and buying up that Gloucestershire country estate you've always dreamt about. And if you pick your spot, you can find yourself in proper countryside yet close to many of the comforts that you thought you would have to leave behind – like Michelin-starred restaurants, funky galleries and arthouse cinemas.

However extreme the proposed move may be, a rental property can offer a stress-free way to dip your toe in the water before taking the plunge. It also

comes with the added bonus that someone else is responsible for the roof, boiler and ongoing maintenance for a change.

That said, in many cases when people are moving out of London, they choose to hold on to their city property while they make up their minds on the move. This means of course that they are not stepping off the London property ladder and missing out on any future gains the market could offer, a factor that can make it difficult to return even relatively soon after leaving London for pastures new.

More often than not, the experiment is a successful one and the move goes ahead. And in those cases where the chemistry doesn't happen, it's simply a case of handing back the keys and booking the movers. Either way, you'll know that your next move is definitely the right one.



Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

An attractive Colonial style detached 4 bedroom house to rent with a self-contained 1 bedroom apartment set in beautiful gardens and grounds which overlook the National Trust's Tudor Mansion, Greys Court. Guide price: £4,000 per calendar month

Knight Frank Henley, lettings 01491 738850



Virginia Water, Surrey

A superbly presented townhouse within the ever popular Virginia Park development with 'residents only' access to the leisure facilities and gated entrance with 24 hour security. Guide price: £3,950 per calendar month

Knight Frank Ascot, lettings 01344 527641

The property *wish list*



Ascot, Berkshire. Guide price: £1,175,000
Knight Frank Ascot, sales 01344 527003



Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. Guide price: £1,750,000
Knight Frank Berkhamsted, sales 01442 493002



Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Guide price: £1,350,000
Knight Frank Cheltenham, sales 01242 279081



Cobham, Surrey. Guide price: £1,795,000
Knight Frank Cobham, sales 01932 379054



Inveresk, Near Edinburgh. Offers in excess of: £1,950,000
Knight Frank Edinburgh, sales 0131 268 0027



Leatherhead, Surrey. Guide price: £1,650,000
Knight Frank Esher, sales 01372 434002



Near Woking, Surrey. Guide price: £1,850,000
Knight Frank Guildford, sales 01483 491000



Horsham, West Sussex. Guide price: £1,950,000
Knight Frank Horsham, sales 01403 289124



Sherborne, Dorset. Guide price: £1,300,000
Knight Frank Sherborne, sales 01935 388001



Broad Campden, Gloucestershire. Guide price: £1,500,000
Knight Frank Stow, sales 01451 518002



Hawkhurst, Kent. Guide price: £1,100,000
Knight Frank Tunbridge Wells, sales 01892 310006



Thorpe, Surrey. Guide price: £1,150,000
Knight Frank Virginia Water, sales 01344 527009

A budget of between £1-2 million might only get you a one bedroom apartment in certain areas of London, which goes a long way to explaining why we're seeing more and more people swapping their London lives for the kind of lifestyle offered by out of town properties like these.

The rewards of country living stretch to a very long list, but topping it has to be space. Relocating out of London is a Tardis-like experience that can net you a home with as many as eight bedrooms, complemented by private outdoor space – whether that's a blissfully secluded walled garden or several landscaped acres. Then there's the fresh air, the tranquility, the ease of accessing open countryside and all the leisure pursuits to be found there.

Since the election, buyers and sellers alike have swung into action, and with interest rates at record lows, demand is soaring. Thanks to our network of 29 London offices, we're able to capture the widest possible range of people looking to enhance their quality of life and reap the rewards of relocating to the country. And from Exeter to Edinburgh, our network of regional offices has the country covered.

Chic townhouses, magnificent period residences, idyllic country cottages, grand new statement homes...from traditional splendour to the best in contemporary living, there's a treasure trove of stunning homes out there. And the properties shown here are just the tip of the iceberg – you'll find many, many more on our website **KnightFrank.co.uk**



Head of Country Sales
David Peters
david.peters@knightfrank.com

Head of Lettings
Tim Hyatt
tim.hyatt@knightfrank.com

South West Regional Chair
Andrew Rome
andrew.rome@knightfrank.com

Central Regional Chair
Atty Beor-Roberts
atty.beor-roberts@knightfrank.com

Home Counties Regional Chair
Edward Rook
edward.rook@knightfrank.com

Home Counties Regional Chair
Nigel Mitchell
nigel.mitchell@knightfrank.com

Knight Frank Finance
Tim Woods
tim.woods@knightfrankfinance.com

Head of London Sales
Noel Flint
noel.flint@knightfrank.com

+44 20 8022 3994
KnightFrank.co.uk



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COMING
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Hannah Edge MRICS

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THE COTSWOLDS | GLOUCESTERSHIRE
THE SOUTH WEST | WEST SUSSEX

Mickleton | Gloucestershire

Guide Price £695,000



Elegant Grade II Listed family home with undulating farmland views

About 1.66 acres

Hall | 2 Reception rooms | Kitchen/breakfast room
Utility room | Workshop | Cellar | 5 Bedrooms
2 Bathrooms | Dressing room/study | Garden
Paddock | Double carport | Stable | Stores
Pig sties

Moreton-in-Marsh 01608 650502
simon.merton@struttandparker.com

Great Wolford | Warwickshire

Longborough | Gloucestershire



Elegant and spacious family house nestled within a pretty Warwickshire village

Entrance hall | Sitting room | Dining room | Kitchen/breakfast room
Utility room | Cloakroom | 2 Bedroom suites | 2 Further bedrooms
Family bathroom | Garden | Garage | Parking | EPC rating E

Guide Price £750,000

Moreton-in-Marsh 01608 650502
david.henderson@struttandparker.com

Pretty cottage replete with period features in an elevated position within this Cotswold village

Large drawing/living room | Dining room | Kitchen | Utility/cloakroom
Master bedroom suite | 2 Further bedrooms | Family bathroom
Courtyard terrace | Garden | Parking | EPC rating F

Guide Price £695,000

Moreton-in-Marsh 01608 650502
anona.vanlawick@struttandparker.com

Andoversford | Gloucestershire



A stunning architecturally designed contemporary home
10,000 sq ft comprising: 5 Reception rooms | 5 En suite bedrooms |
10 Car garage | Pool and gym complex ready for completion | About
6.5 acres | EPC rating C

Guide Price £3,750,000

Cirencester 01285 653101

peter.sharvell@struttandparker.com

Ashton Keynes | Wiltshire



A spacious period family farmhouse on the edge of the village
Hall | 3 Reception rooms | Kitchen | Breakfast room | Utility |
7 Bedrooms | 3 Bathrooms | Stabling and useful outbuildings |
Gardens | Paddock | About 1.6 acres | EPC rating F

Guide Price £1,100,000

Cirencester 01285 653101

sam.trounson@struttandparker.com

Holwell, Nr Burford | Oxfordshire



A beautifully presented modern barn conversion in a quiet edge of
village setting

Dining hall | Sitting room | Kitchen/breakfast room | Utility room |
4 Bedrooms | 3 Bath/shower rooms (2 en suite) | Enclosed garden |
EPC rating C

Guide Price £895,000

Cirencester 01285 653101

harry.sheppard@struttandparker.com

Bagpath | Gloucestershire



A well presented converted schoolhouse with excellent southerly views
38ft Drawing/dining room | Kitchen/breakfast room | Utility room |
Cloakroom | 3 Bedrooms | 2 Bath/shower rooms (1 en suite) | Twin
carport | Courtyard garden | Beautiful rural views | EPC rating F

Guide Price £800,000

Cirencester 01285 653101

harry.sheppard@struttandparker.com



A SPACIOUS HOME WITH USEFUL OUTBUILDINGS CHARINGWORTH, WINCHCOMBE

Entrance hall ♦ drawing room ♦ dining room ♦ sitting room ♦ kitchen/breakfast room ♦ conservatory ♦ master bedroom with en suite dressing room and bathroom ♦ three further en suite bedrooms ♦ detached garage block with wine cellar and studio over ♦ detached workshop building ♦ large driveway offering parking for numerous vehicles ♦ EPC = D

Guide £1.35 million Freehold

Savills Cheltenham

Catherine Anderson
canderson@savills.com

01242 548002



A FASCINATING GRADE II LISTED FORMER GAOL TEWKESBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Entrance hall ♦ sitting room ♦ dining room ♦ kitchen & breakfast room ♦ study & snug ♦ utility, cloakroom ♦ master bedroom with en suite bathroom, sitting & dressing room ♦ bedroom with en suite shower room ♦ 4 further bedrooms ♦ family bathroom ♦ second sitting room ♦ garden ♦ parking ♦ EPC = Exempt

Guide £625,000 Freehold

Savills Cheltenham

Christian Swaab
cswaab@savills.com

01242 548003



A WONDERFUL NEW BUILD COUNTRY HOUSE BUILT BY S&S CONSTRUCTION READY TOKEN, NR CIRENCESTER

Reception hall ♦ drawing room ♦ dining room ♦ cinema room ♦ garden room ♦ study ♦
kitchen/breakfast room ♦ 5 en suite bedrooms ♦ potential self contained guest suite ♦
swimming pool ♦ attached carport ♦ landscaped gardens ♦ in all about 1.7 acres ♦ EPC = D

Guide £3.5 million Freehold

Savills Cirencester

Anthony Coaker
acoaker@savills.com

01285 627550



AN IMPRESSIVE GRADE II LISTED COUNTRY HOME WESTBURY-ON-SEVERN, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Reception hall ♦ sitting room ♦ drawing room ♦ dining room ♦ kitchen & breakfast room
♦ utility, cloak room ♦ master en suite bedroom ♦ 4 further bedrooms ♦ 3 bathrooms
♦ games room ♦ substantial cellars ♦ detached garage ♦ about 0.9 acre ♦ EPC = Exempt

Guide £750,000 Freehold

Savills Cheltenham

Christian Swaab
cswaab@savills.com

01242 548003



A UNIQUE FORMER MILL HOUSE BODDINGTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Entrance hall ♦ drawing room ♦ sitting room ♦ dining room ♦ kitchen/breakfast room ♦
study/bedroom 3 ♦ master bedroom with en suite ♦ second bedroom ♦ bathroom ♦ off
road parking ♦ gardens mainly laid to lawns with former mill pond ♦ EPC = G

Guide £595,000 Freehold

Savills Cheltenham

Catherine Anderson
canderson@savills.com

01242 548002

Stow-on-the-Wold office
Cotswold House, Church Street,
Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire GL54 1BB
01451 832832
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incorporating



A TRADITIONALLY BUILT COTSWOLD HOUSE WITH MODERN FARM BUILDINGS

LITTLE RISSINGTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Set in an elevated position with glorious views ♦ GIA 2,844 sq ft over three floors ♦ spacious sitting/dining room ♦ study ♦ farmhouse kitchen with Rayburn ♦ four bedrooms ♦ two en-suite bathrooms ♦ family bathroom ♦ self-contained studio flat ♦ double carport/store ♦ informal gardens and grounds ♦ substantial modern farm buildings ♦ permanent pasture paddocks ♦ woodland ♦ in all about 35 acres ♦ EPC=D

Guide price £2.25 million freehold

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BAMPTON, OXFORDSHIRE

Immaculate character property with pretty walled garden ♦ 2 reception rooms ♦ kitchen/breakfast room ♦ 4 bedrooms ♦ 2 bathrooms ♦ conservatory ♦ attic room ♦ garage with office above ♦ EPC = C

Guide £600,000

Savills Summertown

Huw Warren
hwarren@savills.com
01865 339704



LONG COMPTON, WARWICKSHIRE

Sitting room ♦ kitchen/dining room ♦ utility room & WC ♦ 6 bedrooms (2 en suite) ♦ 2 separate family bathrooms ♦ double garage & office ♦ gardens ♦ EPC = B

Guide £975,000 Freehold

Savills Banbury

Iain Powis
ipowis@savills.com
01295 228007



STOW-ON-THE-WOLD

Auction Guide Price £950,000 - £1,000,000

An important Grade II Listed Georgian building with planning permission to create an elegant Town House with annexe and detached cottage in the heart of the town. For Sale by Public Auction on 23rd September. 6 Bedroom main house and 2 Bedroom annexe, 3 Bedroom detached Cottage. Gardens, Private Parking. Illustrated catalogue available on our website.

Stow-on-the-Wold Office 01451 830383



BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER

Auction Guide Price £550,000 - £600,000

A prime freehold investment opportunity comprising restaurant, three bedroom maisonette and car park in excellent central trading position. Producing £31,250 per annum. For Sale by Public Auction on 23rd September.

Bourton-on-the-Water Office 01451 820913



BURFORD

Auction Guide Price £390,000 to £410,000

A traditional Cotswold stone barn with full planning permission to convert to a 5 bedroom dwelling set in an elevated position in the heart of its plot. In all 3.36 acres. For Sale by Public Auction on 23rd September.

Stow-on-the-Wold Office 01451 830383

*Guides are provided as an indication of each sellers minimum expectation. They are not necessarily figures at which a property will sell for and may change at any time prior to the auction. Each property will be offered subject to a reserve price (a figure below which the auctioneer cannot sell the property during the auction) which will be set within the quoted guide range or no more than 10% above a single figure guide.

Bourton-on-the-Water Office 01451 820913

Chipping Norton Office 01608 644344

Stow-on-the-Wold Office 01451 830383

www.taylerandfletcher.co.uk



Sandhurst • Gloucestershire

A beautifully presented detached home of approximately 1,300 sq ft, outbuildings and 8 acres of agricultural land. 2 generous reception rooms, 3 double bedrooms, study/bedroom 4, 2 bathrooms and stables. *EPC D.*

Guide price £650,000 Cheltenham office 01242 246980



Eastcombe • Gloucestershire

Located in an idyllic part of the Cotswolds, Hawkley Wood Cottage is a 4/5 bedroom family home bursting with character. Set in approximately 2 acres of land, this delightful property is situated on the edge of Eastcombe offering privacy but is only a short walk to local shops and schools. *EPC E.*

Guide price £895,000 Nailsworth office 01453 836736



North Nibley, Nr Tetbury • Gloucestershire

A very large former mill, privately situated in enchanting Cotswold countryside and not overlooked by any other property. This wonderful home provides extensive accommodation, comprising a mill, a house and a separate 2 bedroom cottage, 7 bedrooms in total, all of which are set within 3 acres of manicured gardens with lakes and a further 4 acres of land. *EPC F*.

Guide price £1,500,000 Cirencester office 01285 655355



Tetbury • Gloucestershire

Within the heart of the town centre is this delightful natural stone Grade II listed detached family home dating back to 1661, with spacious rooms on 3 levels.

2 reception rooms, home office, 4 bedrooms, 3 bath/shower rooms, wine cellar and courtyard garden.

Guide price £550,000 Tetbury office 01666 504418

A HOUSEHOLD NAME SINCE 1842

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Part of the Chestertons Group

Cirencester 01285 650955
cirencester@humberts.com



Forthampton

Guide Price Lot 1: **£1,950,000**

A magnificent family house in an idyllic setting. 4 reception rooms, 8 bedrooms, games room, period coach house, pool and pool house, barn and log store, gardens and grounds. Potential to be an equestrian property. EPC Rating E.



Fairford

Guide Price: **£750,000**

Holmdene is a handsome Grade II listed town house, located in the bustling Market Town of Fairford and only a short walk from the centre. EPC Exempt.



Alex
Holmes



Julia
Chappell



Tim
Pumfret



Natasha
Cooke



Regulated
by RICS





Cirencester

Guide Price: **£600,000**

A grade II listed chapel with real 'wow' factor. This unique property has been sympathetically converted to maintain the original features of the chapel whilst creating a stylish, yet, contemporary open plan home. EPC Rating Exempt.



Cricklade

Guide Price: **£525,000**

A charming detached Victorian property in a semi rural location, which has been extended and improved to offer a light and spacious family home retaining many of the original character features. EPC Rating C.





jackson-stops.co.uk

**Jackson-Stops
& Staff**



Castle Eaton

A delightful Grade II Listed Georgian fronted six bedroom home.

- Sitting Room • Dining Room • Kitchen • Breakfast Room
- Utility Room • Garden Room • Boot Room • 6 Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms • Walk-in Airing Cupboard
- Large Garden • Garden Store • Gabriel Ash Greenhouse

Guide Price £1,200,000

FF61792



Broadway 6 miles

A substantial house, barn and outbuildings (total 5,000 sq.ft.) in a 7 acre setting.

- 2 Reception Rooms • Conservatory • Kitchen/Breakfast Room
- Master Bedroom Suite • 2 Double Bedrooms • Family Bathroom
- Potential to extend to 5 bedrooms • 1 mile to mainline station

Guide Price £1,075,000

FF61530



Chipping Campden

A townhouse situated in easy walking distance of the town centre.

- Reception Hall • Drawing Room • Snug-Garden Room
- Dining Room • Kitchen/Breakfast Room • Cloakroom
- Utility Room • Master Bedroom with En-suite Bathroom
- Two further Double Bedrooms (1 En-suite) • Bedroom 4/Study
- Family Shower Room • Garden • Double Garage and Parking

Guide Price £800,000

FF62042



Bledington

A beautifully presented detached house on a quiet lane.

- Entrance Hall • Utility Room • Cloakroom • Kitchen/Breakfast Room
- Sitting Room • Dining Room • Play/Garden Room
- Study • Further Study/Office/Library Area • 4 Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms • Oak Framed Garage with Wood Store • Garden
- Driveway Parking

Guide Price £795,000

FF61929

People **Property** Places

Local & National reach through a network of London & Regional offices





Alvescot

Refurbished and extended period cottage with off-road parking.

- Entrance Hall • Sitting Room • Utility Room
- Dining Room • Kitchen/Breakfast Room • Cloakroom
- 4 Bedrooms • En-suite Shower Room • Bathroom
- Driveway and Parking • Garden and Land

Guide Price £695,000

FF61869



Little Clanfield

A detached house with wonderful views and 2 acres of land.

- Drawing Room • Sitting Room and Conservatory
- Kitchen/Breakfast Room • 3 Double Bedrooms • Shower Room
- Garden and Paddock • Parking • Solar and Oil Fired Central Heating
- Lovely walks nearby • In all just over 2 acres

Guide Price £650,000

FF61860



Chipping Campden

A delightful and well-presented cottage rebuilt by Robert Ashby.

- Dining Hall • Sitting Room • Drawing Room
- Kitchen • Master Bedroom • 2 Further Bedroom
- Family Bathroom • Lovely Garden
- Timber Office

Guide Price £495,000

FF60754



Baunton

A three bedroom house within a courtyard development.

- Entrance Porch • Reception Room • Dining Room
- Kitchen • Utility Room • Three Bedrooms
- En-Suite Shower Room • Bathroom • Garden
- Garage • Courtyard Parking

Guide Price £425,000

FF61656

Burford

01993 822 661

burford@jackson-stops.co.uk

Chipping Campden

01386 840 224

campden@jackson-stops.co.uk

Cirencester

01285 653 334

cirencester@jackson-stops.co.uk



Connecting the Cotswolds with
the Oxford and London network



Fulbrook, Oxfordshire

A beautifully renovated Cotswold cottage in popular village location close to Burford.

Ground floor: Entrance hall, sitting/dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, reception room/bedroom 5, utility area, shower room.

First floor: Master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, 2 further bedrooms, shower room.

Second floor: Double bedroom with study area off. Driveway providing parking. Landscaped garden.

EPC= F



Offers in excess of £780,000



Burford, Oxfordshire

Grade II Listed Cotswold cottage, a perfect second home/holiday let in the heart of Burford tucked away in the picturesque lane leading to Burford Church.

Sitting/dining room, kitchen, 3/4 bedrooms, bathroom, second floor family room/bedroom 4. Courtyard garden for al-fresco dining with views of the church.



Guide price £425,000



Fergus Mitchell
Director
Burford Office
fergus@pennyandsinclair.co.uk



Kate McKinnon
Sales Manager
Burford Office
kate@pennyandsinclair.co.uk



Sophie Lee
Lettings Manager
Burford Office
sophie.lee@pennyandsinclair.co.uk



Emma Johnson
Lettings Negotiator
Burford Office
emma@pennyandsinclair.co.uk



Kencot, Oxfordshire

Guide price £745,000

An impressive 19th century 4 bedroom period property with potential to extend further set in mature part walled gardens with double garage in this charming village.

Entrance hall, sitting room, kitchen/breakfast room, cloakroom, master bedroom suite, 3 further bedrooms, bathroom.

Part walled gardens, double garage, driveway providing parking.

EPC rating = D



Burford, Oxfordshire

£420,000

A pretty Grade II Listed Cotswold stone cottage with courtyard garden in the heart of historic Burford

Entrance lobby, sitting room, kitchen/breakfast room, 1st floor double bedroom with en-suite shower room, 2nd floor double bedroom with en-suite bathroom. Courtyard garden.



Fergus Mitchell
Director
Burford Office
fergus@pennyandsinclair.co.uk



Kate McKinnon
Sales Manager
Burford Office
kate@pennyandsinclair.co.uk



Sophie Lee
Lettings Manager
Burford Office
sophie.lee@pennyandsinclair.co.uk



Emma Johnson
Lettings Negotiator
Burford Office
emma@pennyandsinclair.co.uk



Longborough

A refurbished detached house in the centre of its plot, within the popular village of Longborough
 Entrance hall | Family room | Sitting room | Dining room/orangery | Kitchen/breakfast room | Study | Utility |
 Cloakroom | Bedroom one with dressing area and en-suite shower room | Bedroom two with en-suite shower
 room | Three further bedrooms | Two further bathrooms | Gardens and gravelled parking area | EPC Band D

Guide Price £1,100,000

Moreton-in-Marsh Office
01608 651188



Longborough

A delightful period cottage in the desired village of Longborough with sweeping views over the Evenlode valley
 Sitting room with an open fire | Dining room/entrance hall | Kitchen/family room | Four double bedrooms |
 Landing/study area | Bathroom | Shower room | Landscaped garden | Four stone built outbuildings | Located in
 the heart of the village | EPC Band E

Guide Price £595,000

Moreton-in-Marsh Office
01608 651188

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STANTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

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Detached and impressive Grade II Listed village family home

An impressive and imposing detached house which stands on the edge of the famous village green at Frampton on Severn. The best view in the village to watch the cricket or wander for a refreshment at The Bell Inn.

This is a Grade II Listed family home with a host of features and space to get lost in! The rooms are arranged on 3 floors and there are 5 bedrooms, 5 receptions as well as a well appointed kitchen and bathrooms.

The house is a very impressive family home, but the location is special too. The village is well renowned and has a thriving primary school, a shop, cafe and 2 village pubs. Junction 13 of M5 allowing access to Bristol or the North is just a few miles back up the lane. EPC - Exempt

FRAMPTON ON SEVERN

£950,000



An impressive detached former farmhouse standing in its own grounds of over 4 acres

TIRLEY

£995,000

Wonderful location for this impressive detached former farmhouse which stands in its own grounds of over 4 acres. Amazing gardens have been created over time with hard work from the present owners. The house itself is elegant and spacious with accommodation on 3 floors. Outside there is a detached bungalow annexe and a former farm building provides drive under garaging for 3 vehicles plus storage to either side from the garden machinery, logs etc.

Tucked away up this country lane you are far from the madding crowd, yet the M5 & M50 are just a short drive away. This is a substantial property in an exceptional location. EPC - F



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An extended and improved, beautifully presented, detached house with wonderful far reaching views.

A beautifully presented detached house, located just off the slopes of Cleeve Hill - well away from traffic and enjoying some of the best views the area has to offer; as far as the Malvern Hills in the distance.

Extended and improved by the present owners, this pretty house enjoys space around it with a well tended garden and the open aspect of the paddock in front. The property is sunny and light and the accommodation is varied and adaptable with 3 receptions to choose from downstairs as well as the kitchen, breakfast room, utility and shower room/WC. Upstairs there are 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, all with fabulous views. EPC - E

CHELTEMHAM

£875,000



Detached Cotswold cottage and magical woodland glade setting. Hidden valley location between Bisley and Slad.

BISLEY

£599,950

Far from the Madding Crowd is a good description of the setting for this detached Cotswold cottage. Set in a woodland glade located in a hidden valley between Bisley and Slad villages.

Beautifully presented by the owners, the cottage has 2 double bedrooms and fantastic views from every window. Some rooms have 5 windows taking in the view. There is parking, a garage, a productive vegetable garden as well as a pretty and colourful flower garden. The cottage also owns the surrounding woodland of 2.217 acres. EPC - F



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- 4 further Bedrooms • Bathroom • Swimming Pool Complex with Entertainment Area • Double Garage • Stores • Garden Room • EPC Rating D

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Partner



James Murray
Partner



Jamie Dalrymple-Hamilton
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A FARRIERS' FAIRYTALE

John had only lived at Forge house for three years when a back injury forced him to give up shoeing. He reluctantly sold up the dream home he had built and moved on to pursue a new career

WHEN farrier John McCormick rented a historic Forge in Daglingworth in 1969 he could not have envisioned the opportunities that his hard work would bring.

His brother Mick came down from Lancashire to join him and serve his time as an apprentice Farrier, and they both worked together until 1976 when John was invited to work for the Sultan of Brunei. Initially he went out for three months, however ended up going there for 20 years as a teacher, and trained many farriers for the Sultan.

Although John is now retired Mick continues to work for the Sultan of Brunei is well known in the Cotswolds for his skills and has many local high-profile clients.

The owner of the Forge that John rented was so delighted for it to be continued and used as intended that she subsequently bequeathed the site, The Forge and an adjoining paddock to the brothers

John and Mick split the plot. In 1984 the brothers undertook two building projects Mick building a house in the paddock and John building using the natural stone and materials reclaimed from the original Forge in the construction of Forge House and a few choice finds.



That year, the York Minster Cathedral was struck by lightning and damaged in the great fire, and the impressive beam above the fireplace at Forge House has an interesting story – it literally 'fell off the back of a lorry'!

Prince Charles had generously donated Duchy Oak to the restoration project, and as the last lorry was driving away loaded down with wood, bound for the restoration project, a large log fell off and laid in the lane for a week. 'that will do for my fireplace' thought John, so he rescued the log and incorporated it in the inglenook fireplace in the impressive lounge where

it sits seamlessly blending tradition with the modern convenience of Forge House.

John designed Forge House with the help of a local architect and it was built over the course of nine months by 'two fine brickies and one labour'

'It was an exciting time. How often does anyone get the opportunity to build their own house? We got a chance and we took it'

When asked what he loves about Forge house he said, wistfully:

'It is modern but looks traditional. the views are fantastic, it's a great home to entertain friends and family. It's a lovely house to live in, has a comfortable, cosy feel. As soon as I walked in the front door I said I love this house, it just feels right.'

Now a substantial five bedroom house with three reception rooms, when John designed it it had four good size bedrooms and what is now the dining room was originally designed as a billiard room, however this was soon adapted to house John's in-laws so he never did get to play billiards in the large, light room, something that remains on his bucket list at the age of 70.

John now breeds Drum Horses for the Queen in south-west Scotland.



Forge House is for sale at £800,000

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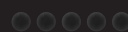
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It traded continually as a pub until 1976 when it became a five bedroom private house for 8 years. It was in 1984 that it opened as, what proved to be, an extremely popular Antiques Shop under the ownership of Mick and Fanny Wright. It ceased to be a physical shop on 29th March 2014.

The current commercial consent is for antique use and curios. However subject to planning there is scope for other commercial uses or to revert back to residential. Please seek guidance on this from the Planning Department at Stroud District Council.

Consists residential house with 34'ft shop space, character features, potential for 5 bedrooms, kitchen, utility, out-building, carport, cellar, parking and garden. EPC: TBA

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Unfurnished £2,200 pcm



EPC - E

CALCOT

A detached Cotswold stone house with a stunning garden along a no-through road.

Kitchen/breakfast room
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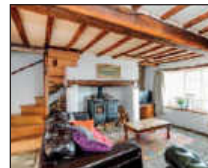


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PHOTOGRAPHY BY: CARL HEWLETT/TWM



The world's only operational Avro Vulcan, XH558 flying over RAF Fairford with The Red Arrows marking its final ever appearance at The Royal International Air Tattoo



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Planes ready to taxi onto the runway



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The Spanish Air Force during their aerobatic display



The Red Arrows wowing the crowds at The Royal International Air Tattoo on Sunday afternoon



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The pursuit of the *perfect women*

Happy 1950s housewives, joyously smiling in pinnies, feather-dusters in hand: Virginia Nicholson's book, *Perfect Wives in Ideal Homes*, is a fascinating insight into a world where women's lib meant having your own washing machine. Katie Jarvis spoke to Virginia ahead of her talk at Calcot Manor on September 28

Once had the pleasure of interviewing the extraordinary Stella Rimington - first female head of M15; first ever director general to have their name published on appointment. A Rosa Parks of feminism, you might say.

Yet she told me this. When she joined the service in 1959, women received two-thirds the pay of their male counterparts - and it didn't worry her one jot. "We were not revolutionary types," she said.

Virginia Nicholson's marvellous book, *Perfect Wives in Ideal Homes*, is full of such counterintuitive stories. Real-life stories from women so different from us; yet women who became us; who made us what we are today. There's Lorna Arnold, a gifted deep-thinker who became a conscientious vegetarian as a child. From 1940, she worked for the War Office; after D-Day, she was sent to Berlin - sleeping with a revolver under her pillow as Russian troops went on the rampage - before transferring to Washington as a diplomat (where one of her colleagues was a young but jumpy Donald Maclean).

She knew she was a woman in a man's world. When her temporary contract ended as the men came back from war, her goodbye letter from the Embassy never broached the possibility of her staying on. "And I did think, 'Really this does seem a waste when I've got some quite useful experience...'"

Back in England, Laura's talents were again recognised with an appointment as general secretary of the Family Planning Association, where she worked until three weeks before the birth of her first child, in 1950. When her marriage split up, she went to work in a biscuit-factory to keep the



family fed and housed.

It is mind-boggling to us today that such intelligent, forward-thinking women could accept such inferior treatment, Virginia agrees: "Fairly early on in the book, there's a comment from Diana Athill [the celebrated editor and writer] about how she was totally accepting of being treated like a second-class citizen in her publishing office, even though she was worth twice what most of her colleagues were.

"Brainwash' is too strong a word; but, in a sense, women were convinced by the idea that they had to be certain things, and that those things belonged with wifehood, motherhood, child-rearing and, above all, the home. Being on a level playing-field with men was kind of inconceivable - though it's hard to imagine oneself back into that mind-set."

The stories that Virginia uncovered, as she set about her research, were shocking in more ways than one. Eileen Hawe from Kilkenny, with her auburn hair and dancing green-grey eyes, was one of many Irish women whose schooldays were marked by priests ranting about 'dripping talons' (nail varnish) and 'congealed blood' (lipstick). When her casual boyfriend, George, brought an illegal bottle of drink to a rugby club dance, Eileen imbibed beyond sensibility... and woke up pregnant. The only answer was marriage - so hole-and-corner, because of the shame, that they had to persuade two elderly people they came across in the churchyard to be witnesses.

Eileen was a nurse so at least she had known the facts of life. But for many of the women in Virginia's book, sex was a dirty word - if a word at all. When Audrey Alssebrook started her periods at the age of 14, her mum's only explanation was, "Well, now you'll have this every month... you keep away from t'lads."

Interestingly and inevitably perhaps, young women were not just fighting against prejudice from the men around them; they were often in conflict with other women's attitudes, including those of their mothers.

"Of course," Virginia points out, "we're talking pre-Pill; it didn't even come into this country until 1961, and then it was only for married women. So pregnancy was a real threat. The minute your little girl became a teenager, you kept her under wraps; you kept her in the house."

Thus the story of Valerie Gisborn. Her boyfriend Brian - 'quite the gentleman' - escorted her home one night, kissing her lingeringly by the gate in the wall. "And then, the gate opened: there, to her

appalled gaze, stood her mother. What time did he call this? She smacked her daughter in the face, and ordered Brian to get off home promptly." "I knew by the look of horror that I should be lucky if I saw him again," Valerie admits.

This is a fascinating book, meticulously researched and beautifully written by somebody with their own captivating history. Virginia is the granddaughter of artist Vanessa Bell who was a member of the Bloomsbury group and sister of Virginia Woolf. Indeed, Virginia Nicholson's first book, *Charleston*, is a personal and historic account of the house where her grandparents somewhat unconventionally lived along with fellow artist Duncan Grant. A house she herself remembers as a summer holiday destination where "There was always paint, clay, paper, glue and matches to play with."

But Virginia moved away from family history with her third book, *Singled Out*, which explored the generation of women who had been robbed of men by the carnage of the First World War. Her follow-on, *Millions Like Us*, looked at the lives of women from 1939-49 - the war and its aftermath.

In fact, of course, those seminal periods help to explain a great deal about 50s womanhood.

"You can't underestimate the effect of the bombing campaign in World War 2," Virginia says. "There was a terrible housing-shortage caused by the blitzing of cities right across the UK: the roof over your head had been taken away. As a woman, your power-base had been stolen from you by the war years; you had lost your identity. So to re-establish who you were meant looking backwards to what things had been like pre-war. And that meant putting on pretty clothes, having your hair done nicely and having proper meals on the table at the right time."

Those stories are legion, along with subtly nuanced tales that tell far more than their owners might realise: from the girls' secondary school-teacher, Miss Prudence Moss, who lives off Crosse & Blackwell's Cock-a-Leekie soup, toast and processed peas so that she can afford a table-top television on which to view the Coronation; to the repression of Anthea, presented at court, but tormented by feelings for women that she couldn't even confess to herself.

Yet despite the shudders, there might well be a trace of confusing emotion for many of us, as we read through the stories on these insightful pages. One anecdote that stands out for me - and for many another reviewer - relates to Liz



Perfect Wives in Ideal Homes, by Virginia Nicholson

“Take your pearls off,” he said, and confiscated the necklace for five years as punishment

Monnington, whose young, free and single social-life was a whirl of Young Farmers and Young Conservative dances, tennis, hunting and coffee mornings. But when the handsome David, son of a local landowner, proposed, he told her, “I would like to marry you. But I don’t think I could marry anyone who leads the sort of social life you lead.” Besotted, Liz capitulated and became the perfect wife, keeping herself looking youthful and providing lovely meals... Apart from one occasion when, incensed by something trivial, Liz used the word ‘bloody’. “...at which David turned on her with a chilly severity. ‘Take your pearls off,’” he said, and confiscated the necklace for five years as punishment.

No equivocation there.

The sting in the tale, though, perhaps comes with Liz’s analysis of her life as a married woman. “She kept saying to me, ‘You know, I had a wonderful marriage,’”

Virginia says. “How lucky I’ve been. How fortunate that I was able to have that marriage; have my family; have the kind of life I’ve had.’ And you just think, maybe we’ve got it wrong! Maybe we’re just too demanding!”

Virginia is delighted, of course, that her own two daughters - the book is dedicated to Julia, the elder - are staunch feminists. But perhaps even they will be left, amongst all the horrors, with a small voice asking whether, in any way, we threw the baby out with the perfectly bubble-bathed water.

Virginia Nicholson will be discussing her book *Perfect Wives in Ideal Homes* at a meet-the-author lunch, Calcot Manor, Tetbury, on September 28, beginning at 12 noon. Tickets at £29.50, including lunch, are available from 01666 890391; www.calcotmanor.co.uk





Crossing the tiny bridges is part of the Bourton experience

Dream a little dream

Lynn Ede fights against the obvious clichés, but finds it oh-so difficult when she visits the village dreams are made on

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY: LYNN EDE



Drop by nearby stunning village Lower Slaughter - you may even spot a bride

Bourton-on-the-Water, a Cotswolds destination on the Roman Fosse Way, is charm itself. Set perfectly full of golden, olden stone cottages built many centuries ago, its shops - and tourists, hundreds of them - are frequently visited and it lays claim to a long history of settlement.

Where the clear waters of the River Windrush flow through the village under small bridges dating from the 17th century are found scores of happy children who play for hours with fishing nets. Their even happier parents lay on the grass, close by, catching some own-time in the sun. Yes, this is the village dreams are made on and

where you expect Postman Pat and Jess the cat to appear at any moment, it's that idyllic.

The town of Bourton-on-the-Water has more than an element of a childhood revisited. At the Motor Museum you can take the opportunity to transport yourself back to a time when a smaller than average jolly red and yellow car spoke convincingly to you from BBC TV with the narration of Toyah Willcox. It's where the much-loved car still lives and you can even take a ride. Brum is kept company by other classic cars, vans, bikes and their memorabilia. Ignite your interest at CotswoldMotorMuseum.co.uk

Continuing the miniature theme, a must

is the Model Village. Completed in Cotswold Stone in 1940, the 1/9th scale replica of Bourton is Grade II listed and draws visitors from all over the world. Open every day except Christmas Day, you have plenty of opportunity to aggrandise yourselves and walk tall along the tiny roads or crouch down to peer into the windows of the houses, church and shops. Children and adults alike adore the place. I meet Alister Jackson, his wife Jessica Liyanage and their baby Sebastian on holiday from Winchester.

"Bourton has a good ambience about it," Alister tells me, "even with thousands of other people visiting it! Seems to have all necessary amenities too; the bank, ►



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Local info and goods at the Tourist Office with Jackie and Barbara



Owner of the Model Village, Julian Atherton

“A must is the Model Village. Completed in Cotswold Stone in 1940, the 1/9th scale replica of Bourton is Grade II listed and draws visitors from all over the world.

supermarket, and we also love Painswick, where we are staying.”

Owner Julian Atherton and his wife Vicky are very proud of the miniature construction.

“Maintenance of the place takes time, however, and is expensive. It’s a unique place and still very popular after all these years we are glad to say.”

After which diminutive diversion, you’ll want to pop into the Bourton Model Railway Exhibition at Box Bush to complete the journey for the little ones and check out the toys.

However, it’s not all for children at Bourton-on-the-Water, oh no. The Cotswold Perfumery is where I am heading

and inside I find many chances to test and purchase - my own particular heaven and I leave it smelling divine. To follow the scent a little more seriously, you can take courses in perfumery. There are two courses, rather pricey at first glance, being £195, £295 and a Lab Day at £125 but these are not pop-in events. One day courses, they include lunch at the village’s Dial House Hotel, coffee breaks, a bottle of cologne and one of your own concocted perfume, along with a certificate of completion. Maybe a whiff of a new career beckons. If you want an abode over the shop, there is luxury accommodation available above, outlined at Cotswold-Perfumery.co.uk

In the village, where evidence as far back ►



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The Morris dancers throw shapes navigating around a tiny, bemused observer

as Neolithic habitation has been found, are many tea and gift shops, restaurants, hotels and pubs. You don't have to walk more than a few steps before being enticed to eat or drink and ice creams are seen in most hands.

As you are pondering your next meal, you may well find yourself entertained by Morris dancers. Varying theories exist as to the activity's derivation, from celebrating fertility to the first buds of spring. I meet the members of 'The Travelling Morrice', in between their complicated moves, who say the dancing style was first documented in the 15th century. It's certainly a sight to see, with their white and multi coloured outfits flapping as they jump, skip and shout, the tourists just love the spectacle, quickly gathering into a crowd to clap and cheer at the end. This particular group puts together several tours in The Cotswolds,

With their white and multi coloured outfits flapping as they jump, skip and shout, the tourists just love the spectacle

where originally the teams were made up of 6 men from each village.

The River Windrush is a serene spot to relax. Shallow and crystal clear at this point, the river eventually joins The Thames further down the country. It is a welcome magnet for hot, tired feet. Adults sit on the edge blissfully dangling them in and children splash through, much to the delight of the coach loads of tourists standing upon and crossing the many bridges, set here and there, with cameras poised. One of the reassuring things about the village is that everything is within a few paces. Around the river are places in which to purchase and munch and from there small streets lead to pubs and the quintessentially English cottages. Truly picture postcard stuff. Gah, I said 'picture postcard'. I fought against it, but in Bourton, one can hardly help but do so.

Venturing a little further in the environs, there is more to do. Take a trip to Bourton

Vale Equestrian Centre for a horse ride. Catch some courage to drop into the Bloody Bourton Walking Tour where details of crime, witchcraft and murder will give you the shivers. On Rissington Road, you'll find Birdland Park and Gardens. Twitcher alert! Exotic and rare birds such as pelicans, emus, parrots, waterfowl and penguins. You can follow a nature trail there and have your picnic in the grounds any day of the year except Christmas. If art is your thing, there's a pottery gallery at Clapton Row. You can pick up a map showing most of these and other information at the Tourist office by the river.

A short trip by car along the Fosse Way is the award-winning (including 'Most Romantic Street in Britain') village Lower Slaughter. This is worth a view, simply to take in one of the most beautiful examples of English villages. You will find yet more Cotswold cottages, much less tourism, places to eat and an Old Mill to explore. You might even be lucky, as I was, and spot a bride and groom after their wedding. It is the spot of choice for portraits. A finer backdrop would be hard to find. The banks by the river are superb to take a peaceful break - it's oh so quiet - when you've had your fill of cuteness and just need to get horizontal, and process it all with a glass of wine and simply the sound of the babbling brook. ■



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The *Peter* principle

Peter Hickman is a Cotswold treasure. An inspirational man, he has risen from relatively humble beginnings to become a successful businessman and the driving force behind one of our foremost charities. He told Katie Jarvis about his Cotswold life.

PICTURES BY: ANTONY THOMPSON

When Peter Hickman was nine years old, his father died in a road accident. The family, who lived in old Quedgeley, was plunged into difficult circumstances. “But my mother coped extremely well,” Peter says. “She used to say to me, ‘I have been unlucky and have come down but you will come up; you will be the lucky one’. And with those words, she inspired me.” Indeed she did. Peter went on to build a highly successful hairdressing business, with six salons throughout Gloucestershire and in Herefordshire. It’s a business that helped gain him an MBE – that and his wonderful

charity work. For he founded the Pied Piper Appeal back in 1992 to help fund a new children’s ward at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. The charity is still going strong, transforming the lives of sick and disabled children throughout Gloucestershire.

Peter and his wife Susan have a daughter, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Where do you live and why?

We live in Cheltenham; but, for 30 years, we were in a village called Amberley, and we had a flat in Westminster. When we retired, there was a bit of a pull between urban London and the county of Gloucestershire: Cheltenham is a very nice

compromise. When I was younger, I wrote for fashion magazines in London, and I got fed up of staying in hotels – so I bought the flat, right by Westminster Abbey, which we also used for staff who were there for training. People say the city is a lonely place, but it’s made up of villages, and there are some very nice people. I was lucky – I got to know a Lord, so I could go into the House of Lords’ bar – mind-blowing! I’m a member of various clubs; I love music – I’m a Southbank man – and a member of the Royal Academy in Piccadilly, where I spend a lot of time: art attracts me. But Cheltenham is wonderful – we’ve a house in a hidden corner; our local church of St Mary’s is now a Minster. ►



Peter with his wife Sue and family Leanne, Rhia and Ashley Williams

There's the theatre, festivals, the Wilson art gallery; lots of restaurants, the town hall; always something on. Plus a good stroll along the River Chelt, horse-racing and cricket.

How long have you lived in the Cotswolds?

My family comes from Stroud. My grandfather was managing director of Lewis & Godfrey, a Stroud 'Woolworths' in the 30s and 40s. I was born in Quedgeley, when it was a real old farming village. As a child, there were two treats I used to love. One was to be allowed on the horse-and-trap that delivered milk. My job was to get jugs from the houses, which the farmer would then fill with milk. On the way back, I'd be allowed to hold the horse's reins. The other treat was haymaking, when we boys would have a swig of cider! There were three of us children in the family - my older sister, my younger brother and me. Dad died in a motor accident when I was nine: I didn't feel deprived because my mother coped very well; but I can remember wondering, when I was at school, why I didn't have a dad to meet me like the rest of them did.

What's your idea of a perfect weekend in the Cotswolds?

I'd have a barbecue with my family, in our

garden that my wife, Susan, tends so well. There would be our daughter Jane and husband Merfyn, who runs our Stroud shop; their two children and families, Ashley and Hayley, and our four great-grandchildren. We'd have to have some entertainment, probably musical. I played the piano and guitar when I was young, and my mother played the mandolin. I was also sent to ballet lessons at Rosina Bassett's little private school in Gloucester. At the time, I thought that was dreadful; but it gave me a love of ballet, so now I'm grateful - *almost*... I don't do any ballet now - I want to make that quite clear!

If money were no object, where would you live in the Cotswolds?

I wouldn't live anywhere else but Cheltenham; but, if I had endless money, I'd donate a huge sum to Rotary's polio programme to eradicate the disease from around the world. The main charity I work for locally is Pied Piper: I admire them so much because they've kept to my aim of being a true charity with a very low cost-base. We could send all our money to Africa and India but it wouldn't make any real difference; whereas we are making a difference, looking after children in Gloucestershire. Seeing children's excited faces the day we drove new minibuses to the Milestones special school in

Longlevens, for example - that's worth all the money in the world.

Where are you least likely to live in the Cotswolds?

On the floodplain: they put things in the Severn that I don't really want in my living room.

Where's the best pub in the area?

I could name a dozen but I'm going to go with just two: the Crown at Frampton Mansell; and my brilliant local, the Beehive. I can walk there... and then try to walk home!

And the best place to eat?

I judge Restaurant of the Year for the *Cotswold Life* Food and Drink Awards, so I've got a problem here. Again, I could give you a very long list; but I'm going to stick my neck out and say: Try lunch at Purslane [Rodney Road, Cheltenham].

What would you do for a special occasion?

I've kept my membership of the clubs in London, so we'll go for OAP train tickets to Paddington, a quick (*quick*?) wander round the shops, and then a visit to the Royal Academy in Piccadilly. We'll have a light lunch there or, if I'm more generous, lunch at Barrafinna, a tapas restaurant in Frith

Street. An afternoon stroll along the Thames would be followed by dinner at Al Duca in St James. Two brilliant restaurants, neither terribly expensive.

What's the best thing about the Cotswolds?

Wonderful companies - world-class Renishaw, Dowty's, Smiths, Avon Metals, Gloucester Rugby.

Wonderful education - the new university, Wycliffe College, Cheltenham Ladies' College, Pate's, Eastington Primary in the top 100. It's a magical place for artists - Bibury, Malmesbury, Broadway, Bradford on Avon: William Morris is evident. And wonderful houses - I'm biased because I've observed Roger Head working on Highnam Court for many years. What he's done there is amazing, and he's very generous to Pied Piper.

... and the worst?

You can knock the roads or our politicians, but that's a terribly negative thing to do. I can't be like that. It's a great place.

Which shop could you not live without?

Bloodworths in the Bath Road

My job was to get jugs from the houses, which the farmer would then fill with milk. On the way back, I'd be allowed to hold the horse's reins

[Cheltenham]; I could spend a week's holiday there. They sell anything from nails to hammers. I suppose I ought to say Peter Hickman hairdressers, too, which is partly why I got my MBE. Standing in front of my Queen, she threw me completely because she said, 'Tell me about your hairdressing!' It really was wonderful. I tell people that because it is a compliment to the Queen.

What's the most underrated thing about the Cotswolds?

The weather. We're sheltered from the prevailing north and south-west winds; the Welsh mountains, and the Cornish and Devon moors sweep off most of the bad weather. We're never much below

freezing and never much above 30-something. Sun-worshippers might disagree but it's an excellent climate to live and work in.

What is a person from the Cotswolds called?

'Sir' will do.

What would be a three-course Cotswold meal?

Easy. Asparagus for starters; then Gloucester Old Spot pork, followed by Cerney and Single Gloucester cheeses. And, cheating a little because it's not truly Cotswolds, Susan Hickman's stewed Blaisdon plums.

What's your favourite view in the Cotswolds?

I'd say from Coaley Peak. But there's another view, too. But there's another 'view' that is a joy in a different way - and that's to get a smile from a child who has been helped by Pied Piper.

To get a response from either of those - to make them smile and be happy - is a complete joy.

What's your quintessential Cotswolds village and why?

It's got to be Lower Slaughter. You don't have to have a guide or instructions; just go there and walk about. I wonder where the locals go!

Name three basic elements of the Cotswolds

The care of our farmers: the wonderful limestone countryside of the Cotswolds is not as in nature but farmed and owes a lot to dedicated farmers over the years - people forget that;

A well-rounded dialect, like mine;

And friendly natives (who can be raucous when roused - for instance, Kingsholm).

What's your favourite Cotswolds building and why?

Gloucester Cathedral. My Rotary club donated a lot of money to rebuilding work and, in return, the head mason, Pascal Mychalysin, invited us to his workshop to watch three of his young masons carving stone. It was so impressive.

The other building is the children's unit at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. I can remember saying to my wife, "I've done some beautiful things with ladies' and men's hair but any art I produce is so fleeting. Wouldn't it be wonderful if I'd been an architect." So when I was invited to get involved with building a new children's



ward, my wife said, "This is your chance!" I'd nominate that building for all the fantastic work they do there.

What would you never do in the Cotswolds?

Wear pink.

Starter homes or executive properties?

When I was young, you didn't necessarily buy a home of your own; you rented a flat and saved up. Of course, nowadays the young generation wants it all right now. But you need both starter homes and executive properties: a place of expensive houses is boring, dull and lacks the abrasiveness of the young; while inexpensive houses can lack the measured, developed culture of older people.

What are the four corners of the Cotswolds?

The honey limestone of Chipping Campden; Cheltenham; Cirencester; down to the creamy limestone of Dursley and Bath.

If you lived abroad, what would you take to remind you of the Cotswolds?

My memories.

What's the first piece of advice you'd give to somebody new to the Cotswolds?

We natives are peaceful and friendly - but don't underestimate us. There's a little bit of a threat there!

And which book should they read?

The Spirit of the Cotswolds by Susan Hill.

Have you a favourite Cotswolds walk?

Begin beneath Rodborough Fort with a view of Stroud and its mixed architecture, panning round to the distant Malvern Hills and the Bristol Channel on a good day. Lead on to Bussage and Eastcombe, and then back to Stroud: fairly easy on the legs, with cows for company in the summer, blackberries in the autumn, and wild orchids in spring.

Which event, or activity, best sums up the Cotswolds?

The Pied Piper Ball at Highnam Court on September 12. And anything horsey - from Hartpury College to Badminton; Cheltenham Races; cricket.

If you were invisible for a day, where would you go and what would you do?

I'd go to GCHQ. I know some of the people who work there and even the doorman is a spy.



6 If you only preserved the old, we'd all still be living in thatched cottages.

To whom or what should there be a Cotswolds memorial?

I'd put up a statue to RJ Mitchell, who designed the Spitfire - he and his family lived here for many years. In fact, Gloster Aircraft Company built the first Meteor, so the city is very much a flying centre.

The Cotswolds - aspic or asphalt?

If you only preserved the old, we'd all still be living in thatched cottages. A bit of both is absolutely fine.

What attitude best sums up the Cotswolds?

We think we're OK.

With whom would you most like to have a cider?

I'd choose Madame Christine Lagarde, head of the IMF. I'm very interested in history and I consider her to be a modern historian: I'd like her to tell me what's going to happen in Europe in economic terms. Then there's my mum and dad: I'd like to have them back for 24 hours. I got on very well with my dad. I had my own little wheelbarrow and I remember that I used to dig the garden with him. Another person would be Sir David McMurtry: I do so admire him. Failing that, I'd choose my grandson, Asley Williams, and we'd talk hairdressing. I find him very interesting. He's fired up for all sorts of things - I can see a lot of the young me in him. ■

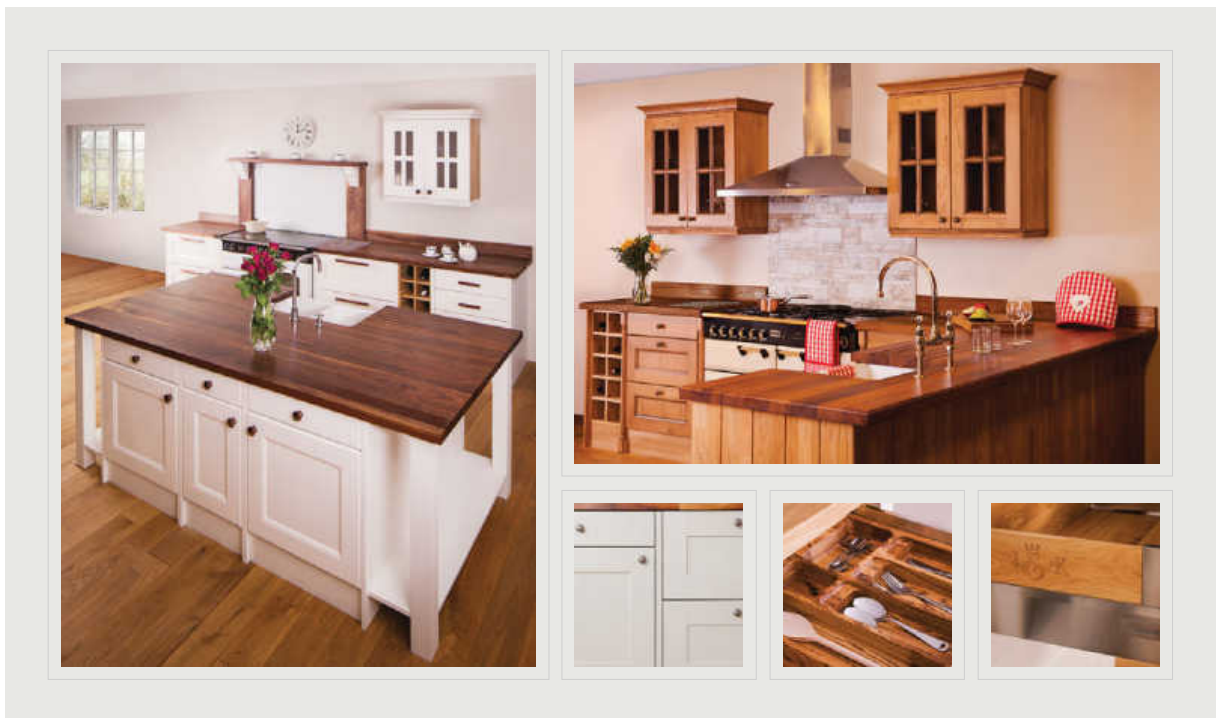
The Pied Piper Ball on September 12 is held at Highnam Court, Highnam, Gloucester. Last year's ball raised more than £10,000 for The Pied Piper Appeal. Tickets for an evening of dancing and a four-course dinner cost £75 per person: www.piedpiperappeal.co.uk; 0300 422 6119

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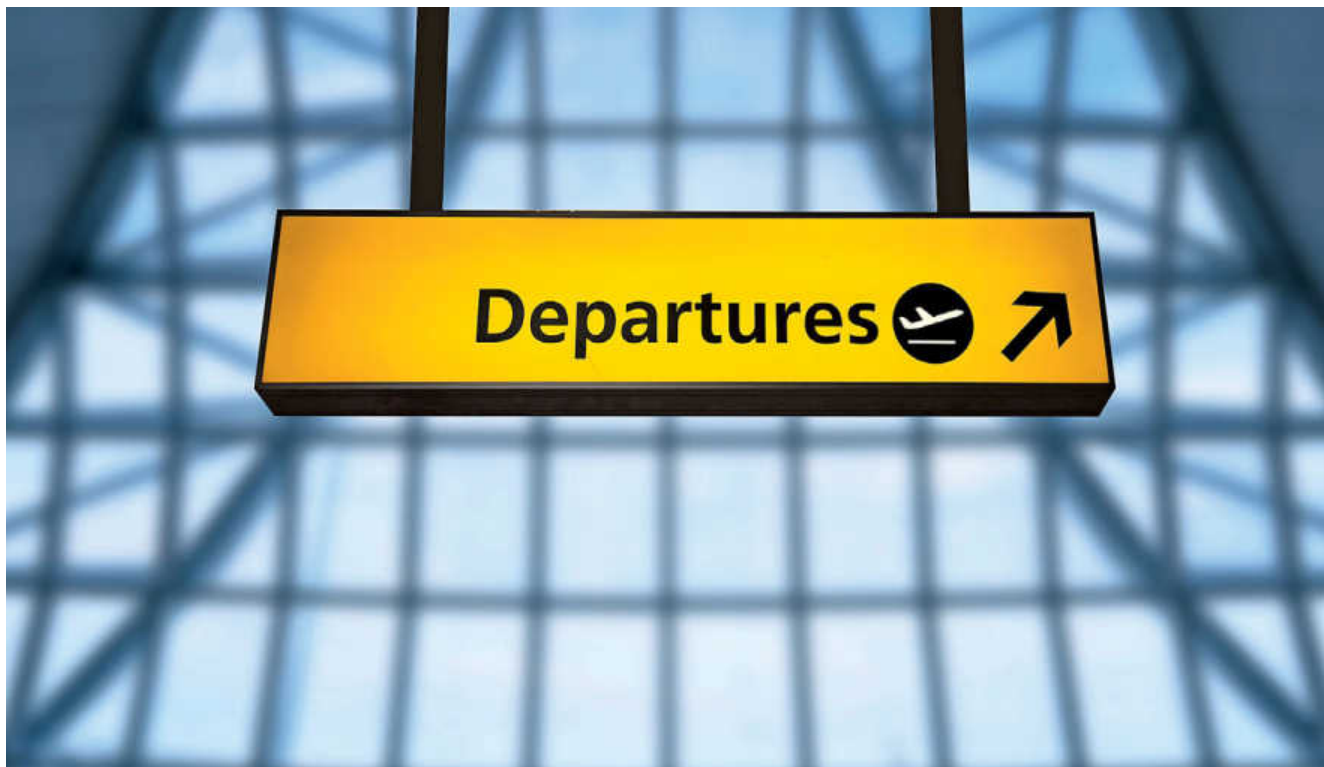
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Cummings'goings

with BBC Radio Gloucestershire's MARK CUMMINGS



No more Bristol blues

Ah, September! A month that divides two distinct sections of society - those with children still at school and those without. For many this is the end of the summer holidays and the long haul up to Christmas, but for others it's party time. It's a fabulous month to either stay in the UK with the calmer, more consistent climate, or head abroad and avoid those horrible hiked-up holiday fees of August. I always think when you splash out for a holiday, part of the payment is for the wonderful anticipation you feel in the weeks leading up to departure. However, what happens if you fear with a deep, deep dread the drive to the airport? I took a call from a desperate man who was about to

head off for a big family wedding in Jersey and they were flying from Bristol Airport. The grit in the oyster was the fact his wife was dreading every moment of the impending departure because she was going to have to drive behind him in convoy with all the extra family members at peak rush hour in Bristol. The thought of which had sent her into a state of extreme anxiety. So to the rescue came my AA audience, link-road listeners, rat-route rebels, and general experts in the best ways to Bristol Airport. Forget the sat-nav, feast your eyes on the best suggestions, then cut out this article and stick it under the flap of your sun visor for emergencies. (If reading this in the doctor's surgery take a sneaky photo with your smart phone).

Come off the M5 at 19 and either...

Go through Gordano village and head past Bristol Grammar School. Head along the A369 for Portishead to Bedminster and pick up the A38 and that will take you there

Or... concentrate with this one. A369 towards Leigh Woods for 200 meters then right to Portbury. In Portbury village go left and take the hill to meet the Clevedon to Bristol road (B3128). Turn left and drive for a mile to Failand where you turn right and follow the road to Flax Bourton. Go under

the A370 and on through Barrow Gurney until you meet the A38. Turn right up the hill and there, my friends, is Bristol Airport.

Or... come off the M5 at Junction 21 for Weston and follow the route for Congresbury to the A38 and bingo you are at the airport.

Or... come off at Junction 20 and simply work your way up the country lanes.

Or... get the train to Bristol and use the connecting bus service.

A home fit for a king

If the whole world was about to stare into your living room you'd want a place to be proud of. This month eyes from all over the planet will be doing precisely this and luckily we've whipped out the feather duster and are just about ready. How great that, as the summer draws to a close and normality should be biting, we get a rugby World Cup to keep the summer spirit rolling along. The city of Gloucester and all surrounding areas will be jumping with a collective festival energy as one of the chosen locations for the group matches. Kingsholm Rugby Stadium will host Tonga v Georgia, Scotland v Japan, Argentina v Georgia and USA v Japan. A dear friend of mine secured a couple of tickets in the ballot for the Tonga v Georgia match and I can't wait. So why does my heart start racing at the prospect of what September could bring to our lives? If the plans I've heard about come off the city of Gloucester will be treated to a spectacular 'opening ceremony' full of drama and theatrics incorporating the county's rich rugby heritage with a few surprises thrown in. On the radio we will be embracing the different nations playing their games at



Kingsholm and no doubt finding fun and inventive ways of showcasing their history and culture onto the show. The games themselves ensure world wide media coverage of not just the city but the whole Cotswolds area. Just like the Cheltenham Festival the ripple effect of these major sporting spectacles stretches far and wide. So enjoy everything the World Cup will bring to our patch, I'm off for one last check our 'home' is fit for visitors; you never know there might still be a little dust behind the European Challenge Cup.

The battle between town and gown

I was in Cheltenham General Hospital the other day for a routine CT scan. I was sitting in the waiting area in my flimsy gown with my fellow patients all waiting to be pumped with dye and shoved through the scanner. The general chatter wasn't about our different health reasons for being there, or the strange little tap we all had inserted into our arms, or the latest news regarding a possible rise in interest rates. No, the talk was all about how many hours we'd put on our car park tickets and how much we'd paid. It is a tricky conundrum when you go for a scan because you have to get there

ideally half an hour before your official appointment, then drink a large vat of water over the space of an hour, then have a plug fitted into your vein, another wait before the scan, then another half an hour before the plug is removed! Parking is not cheap around the hospital, but despite my careful attitude to money I plumped for three hours just in case. I'd started to get a real rapport with my newly-found friends, many of whom hadn't read their instructions before arrival and were now in an intense state of distress, not about what gremlins the scanner might reveal but more about the

traffic wardens circling on the side roads outside. The nurse told me it is common around this part of town to see various shapes and sizes in their revealing gowns belting up to the ticket machine, producing coins from heaven knows where and sprinting to their cars before calmly returning to the waiting area and resuming reading a fascinating article in *Cotswold Life* from 1993. As I returned to my car still musing on the strange feeling of dye coursing through my veins, my day was made complete when I realised I'd been away for 2 hours 55 minutes. Result!

September ramblings

End of the forecourt fun...?

I spotted at a garage in Gloucester with a sign seducing us in with the promise of extra-long hoses at the pump. This should be good news for those who are nervous at the possibility of 'looping'. To loop is a simple pleasure pulling the hose over the car to fill up if you can't get in with the petrol cap next to the pump. However, most of the fun is based on the possibility it might not reach and you could look a forecourt fool. This adds spice to an otherwise mundane task. A well-positioned car, a firm, confident tug of the hose, an extravagant swing over the top of the car and a well-executed nozzle insertion should be seen as a work of art.

Let's go back to the 80s and fade to grey...

Somehow Mrs C and myself ended up three rows from the front of a Spandau Ballet concert at Westonbirt. I once clashed trolleys with Gary Kemp in Waitrose in Cirencester but despite my best efforts to catch his eye I don't think he remembered me. However it was his brother Martin who caught Mrs C's eye and I have to admit mine as well. After years of dying his hair, this ex-Eastender heart throb has let it go natural and looks even more disgustingly good looking as a silver fox. How ironic I've just ordered online a five-year heavily discounted 2,000 bottles of 'Never have a grey day' dye and conditioner.

Clues to a happy marriage...

Richard Rogan from Cheltenham recently took over as the crossword setter for *The Times*. He is a good friend of the show and every time he comes in adds great fun to the morning mayhem. Recently he became world wide news when it was revealed he's helped Matthew Dick place a proposal to his girlfriend Delyth inside a cryptic teaser. Richard has assured us it will be a one-off. When I first interviewed him I asked him how he ended up getting this prestigious job and he indicated he had worked in a similar field. I don't think it takes too much work to suss where he used to be based. If you are still struggling here's a clue: five letters... yummy and sugary.

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What lies beneath

Worcester's £1.1m Cathedral Plaza revamp is uncovering some gems from the city's fascinating past

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: BY LYNN EDE



Worcester Cathedral

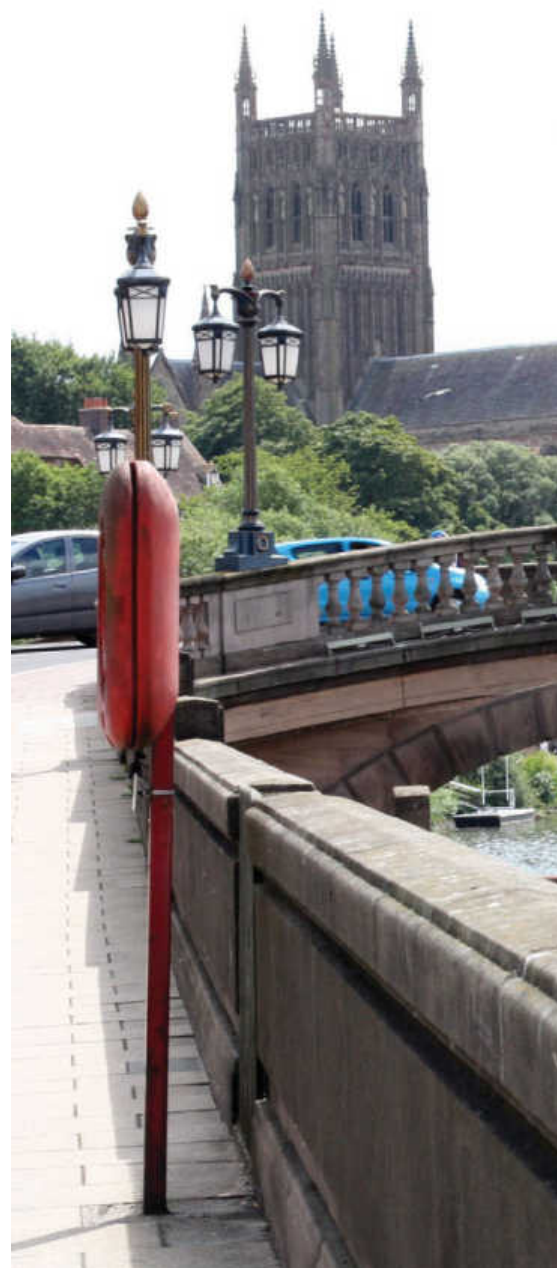
So, you're sitting around in 400 AD, as you do, in the clearing in front of your Worcester hut with the fam', getting on with the day's toil, in the sunshine. Your husband Lucius is lost in concentration as he crafts a farming tool to sell and he's showing young Felix the skills required for the task. Felix has ideas of becoming a blacksmith like his Uncle Atticus but for the moment looks longingly over at his sister Tatiana's freedom as she skips along playing with her clay doll and rolling her ball along the ground before she is set to learning how to bake. You carry on folding the fruit into the dough for breakfast's Ientaculum to lay on the charcoal later. Your aged mother, Tatiana, sits alone close by, occupying herself with scraping her skin with oil and a strigil to clean herself.

Well of course this is a loosely created scene of the past from my overactive imagination, but could you have possibly thought back then that the discarded broken pot by your side might rock up from the ground once more many centuries later, with future humans poring over it with voracious interest? Incredible when you think about it. Who would have imagined such simple objects, crudely

fashioned by today's standards, could survive the elements, but survive they have.

In the recent 10-week archeological dig at the Cathedral roundabout in Worcester, such fruits were unearthed with fervent excitement. Not exactly my Augusta's thrown away pot, but a Saxon storage jar dating from 800 AD, believed to be Stafford produced, was found. Other finds include some Royal Worcester early pottery, some medieval roof tiles and a WWII Military Police cap. Old Lich Street evidence came into view in the excavation, where 1960s residential homes were razed to the ground in order to create the roundabout. The dig also exposed Georgian and Victorian cellars of properties in Lich Street.

It all came about as part of the ongoing £1.1m Cathedral Plaza revamp, work for which has begun and is scheduled for completion in spring of 2016. Funds are to be met by Worcestershire County Council, the City Council and investors Salmon Harvester. Regeneration plans are for a 220,000 sq. ft. shopping centre at the site. It includes a public square in front of the cathedral, retail units, gym facilities, several eateries and a supermarket. It is hoped the new businesses springing up will produce much new employment to be



gained for the area, but in the process the site had to be overseen by Worcestershire Archive and Archeological Service, which then put into place the Tudor House Museum Exhibition in Friar Street.

"It has been an interesting project with tremendous public appreciation," Simon Woodiwiss, Principal Field Archeologist at Worcestershire County Council tells me, "which we are so pleased about. We've tried to share the finds as much as possible in an open way with the public, it is most gratifying. We have had to overcome obstacles such as getting safe access to the



Worcester Bridge over the River Sever

roundabout site with traffic in mind.

“When such redevelopment plans are started, we keep a close eye so that we can record any important finds before work gets too far ahead. This has been very fruitful and fascinating.

“The artefacts were cleaned, dried, marked with codes and regions in which they were found. They are weighed and recorded with dates and purpose of use. The finds will be advantageous for educational purposes. A particular favourite of mine is a relic of the church. Even children will be able to study ►



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Worcester's new Cathedral Plaza development



The Old Rectifying House hotel

pictures and see immediately from where it came. We are now in the process of writing a technical report of the finds, and the items will at future events be able to be shown and appreciated by all."

The city of Worcester is always a fascinating place to visit, with the Elgar trail, its cathedral, theatre, historic Friar Street with the 15th-century merchant house Greyfriars and Tudor House Heritage Centre. The River Severn runs through with its ubiquitous and numerous swans, and provides calm respite from the busy and popular shopping centre. A university city with racecourse too, it would seem to have something for everyone.

An event in the city to jot down to attend is the King John, Magna Carta and Worcester Cathedral Exhibition at the Cathedral. It runs currently until December 2016. This marks the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta this year and also the 800th Anniversary of the death of King John, which falls due in 2016. In September there are pre-booked group visits to the Medieval Library where you will be able to view King John's will; the oldest remaining Royal Testament in England.

It is not the first time Roman treasures have been found in Worcestershire; in 2011 a coin hoard was uncovered by enthusiast metal detectives Jethro Carpenter and Mark Gilmore on Bredon Hill. Maybe it's time to take up a new hobby? Check out websites Midlandmdc.co.uk ; ncmd.co.uk ; WorcesterCathedral.co.uk and diglichstreet.blogspot.co.uk for more information.

Who knows what else Augusta and her family may have left behind for us to uncover from the earth of our Cotswolds region? ■

Cotswold Life lunch at Charingworth Manor

Charingworth Manor Hotel hosted the *Cotswold Life* client lunch in its newly opened summer room, with stunning views over the Cotswolds. Guests enjoyed a champagne reception and canapés, before a sumptuous luncheon of local asparagus, hollandaise sauce and quail's egg, with a main course of lamb loin with crushed Jersey potatoes and vegetable francaise.

Cotswold Life editor Mike Lowe thanked the guests for advertising in the magazine, and told them about our impressive readership figures. Richard Smith from Classic Lodges, who own the hotel, talked about the improvements that the hotel had undergone in the last few years, to enhance guests' enjoyment.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: ANTONY THOMPSON



Charingworth Manor's new summer room



Michael Roberts and Sylvie Weaver



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Charingworth Manor's new summer room



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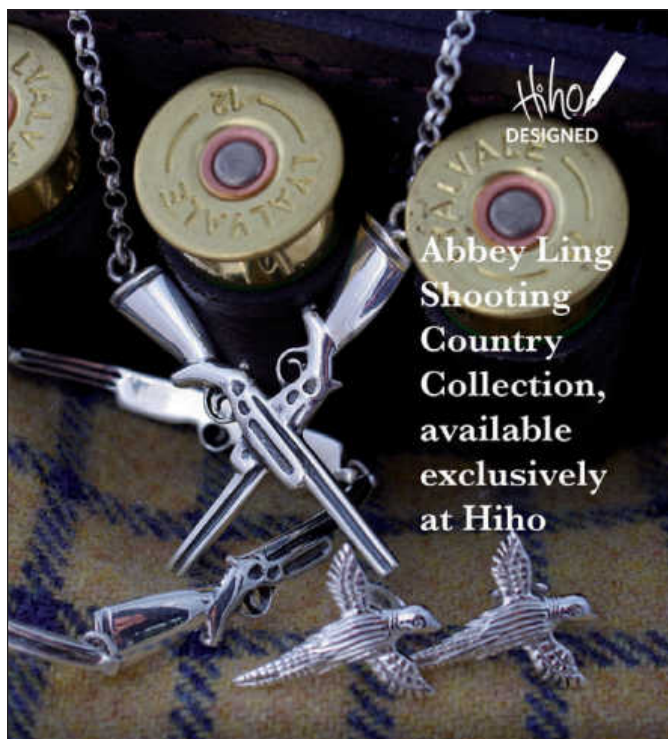
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The countryside in a day

Moreton Show, Saturday, September 5th

There are bigger country shows and some that stretch over several days but very few that can pack so much into one day in September as Moreton Show. This is the countryside in a day - it's farming, food, fashion and fun.

Sitting pretty in the fields of the Batsford Estate on the edge of Moreton in Marsh, this is the show that has typified the glorious Cotswolds since its inception in 1949. A highlight of the summer, the Moreton Show continues to promote local agriculture as well as providing a wealth of entertainment and a social hub for old friends and competitors.

The real stars continue to be the magnificent farm animals - more than 2,000 cows, horses, sheep, pigs, dogs and goats. There is some serious competition too. Moreton is home to the National Poll Hereford Cattle Show and the National Show of Cotswold Sheep and the show is also promoting the Future Farmers'

Initiative, with the next generation of livestock farmers competing in the prestigious and increasingly popular Junior Handler competitions.

Horses compete in five show rings, with classes including qualifiers for the prestigious Horse of the Year Show at the NEC in Birmingham in October and attracting leading riders and equestrian enthusiasts from all over the UK.

Head of Equestrian Classes, Liz Day said: "We have classes for almost every type of horse, from hunters and top sport horses to Dartmoor and Shetland ponies. And for fun, we even have a mounted fancy dress competition."

With farming increasingly about the food on our plates, the Country Larder Food Hall showcases the best of British food and drink. Local producers are well represented and visitors can look forward to some sumptuous choices for breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea. The Home and Garden Marquee, meanwhile, features more than

140 classes for fruit, vegetables and flowers.

There are 350 trade stands showing or selling everything, from Combine Harvesters to Wellington boots. There are rural crafts to marvel at, like mole catching and stone walling. There is even dancing sheep.

The Attractions Ring this year features dogs and ducks, falconry, fancy dress ponies, racing terriers and the parade of vintage tractors that tell their own tale of how things in the countryside used to be.

An injection of speed comes with The IMPS, the dashing youngsters on motorbikes who are coming to Moreton in Marsh fresh from their appearance at the Basel International Tattoo in Switzerland. ■

Tickets are available online or at plenty of local outlets. There are massive savings too if you buy them now. All the details are at www.moretonshow.co.uk

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The last auction

There's still one event that harks back to the good old days of the livestock markets

The world of the livestock auction can be a bewildering and mysterious experience if you've never been to one. It's a place of nods and winks, people speaking in code and the sales themselves seem impossible to follow. But spend a little time in that unique atmosphere and before long the mists begin to clear.

Just like every profession, farming has its own technical terms and conventions while the men and women at market will be using verbal short cuts to hurry things along. I've been going to auctions since I was little, taken along by my Dad at first and then later as a farmer in my own right. They are exciting places full of interesting characters.

At one time there would hardly have been a major town in the Cotswolds region that didn't have its own livestock market. Today it's hard to imagine cattle, sheep and pigs being herded through town centre streets or rounded up and penned at local railway stations. But that was the reality for generations. Sadly the country markets slowly declined from about the time of the Second World War, when towns like Newent lost their regular sales. But it's really been in the last 20 years that large animal auction sites have closed in significant numbers.

Banbury was once Western Europe's biggest cattle market but it sold its last animal in 1998. Gloucester Market never re-opened after the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in 2001 and it wasn't long before town centre markets in Tetbury, Cirencester and Andoversford shut their gates for the final time. What used to be a weekly event and a social gathering for farming families has been revolutionised by new technology, internet trading and the emergence of larger regional auction centres near major roads and motorways.

But every year there's one event in the Cotswolds which harks back to the old days and recreates something of that lost community spirit. The Breeds of Gloucestershire sale at the new Cirencester Livestock Centre beside the A419 has become an annual highlight for everyone



6 This year there were even a couple of yaks for sale!

who appreciates those three very special breeds; Gloucester cattle, Cotswold sheep and Gloucestershire Old Spot pigs. In fact the day is so unusual that it even attracts spectators with no farming connections at all. It has put the spotlight on Britain's vast livestock varieties so much that in the last few years it has expanded to become a Rare, Native and Traditional Breeds Show and Sale. This year there were even a couple of yaks for sale!

The Cotswold Farm Park has always been a keen supporter of the event and we took a selection of good quality goats, cattle and sheep which created a lot of interest. As the auction has become such a crowd-puller it's also the venue for the annual shows of the Cotswold Sheep Society and The Gloucestershire Old Spot Pig Breeders' Club.

All credit must go to the auctioneers, Voyce Pullin, who run the livestock centre near Cirencester. There is no commercial need to hold the rare breeds sale and in the past they have admitted that they don't do it for financial profit. But Chris Voyce and Jon Pullin know the importance of staging this unique event and what a boost it gives to the thousands of people who keep, breed and promote our native livestock. Importantly it also brings members of the public to a place they would never normally visit. That's vital in letting non-farming families know a little about how British agriculture works and it goes some way to breaking down the barriers between our rural and urban communities.

The spectators this year might have had trouble keeping up with the bidding but I guarantee they had a day they will never forget. ■

 @AdamHenson
Cotswold Farm Park,
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GL54 5UG, Tel: 01451 850307
cotswoldfarmpark.co.uk

HOW TO...



© Tom Marshall

Help the hedgehog

As autumn arrives and the smell of wood smoke fills the air, join Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to tackle a prickly subject!

Hedgehogs are disappearing from our gardens and the wider countryside at an alarming rate.

The prickly mammal has suffered a decline in numbers of more than 30% over the past decade and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust wants to do something about it, but it needs your help.

Over the coming months the Trust wants to hear of all hedgehog sightings BUT it's keen for people who haven't seen the animal in their gardens or areas to get in touch too - so it can build up a picture of where they are and aren't found across the county, we even want to hear whether the animals are dead or alive.

This information will enable staff and volunteers to determine what they can do to help the hedgehog and where they

should focus their conservation efforts.

"According to a survey by the People's Trust for Endangered Species, there has been a 32% national decline in hedgehog sightings in rural areas from 2001 to 2011 and a 37% decline in urban areas from 2003 to 2012," says GWT's chief executive Roger Mortlock.

"Both nationally and within Gloucestershire we know relatively little about the current population status of hedgehogs, and with limited data it is difficult to tell exactly what we can do.

"So the most important thing we can do now is find out more. By gathering this information we can work out where they are and, over several years, determine how healthy the population is and where we need to focus conservation efforts."

As well as reporting sightings at www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk/

Did you know?

European swallows spend their winters in Africa, south of the Sahara Desert, and in the Indian sub-continent while the birds that visit Britain return to South Africa on a trip that covers western France, the Pyrenees, eastern Spain, Morocco and across the Sahara.



© Damian Waters



© Amy Lewis



seenahedgehog, there are simple things we can all do in our gardens to make life easier for Mrs Tiggywinkle and her chums.

At the top of the list is trying not to be too tidy: variety in the shape of lawns, compost heaps, wood piles, vegetable beds and flower borders is key to encouraging hedgehogs and it's a good idea not to be too quick to tidy away dead plants in autumn as insects overwintering in the stalks provide food in spring.

Avoiding pesticides is another key move for people keen to encourage hedgehogs. These chemicals reduce the number of insects and molluscs that hedgehogs feed on and can directly cause the mammals to be poisoned.

Meanwhile, having a hedgehog-friendly garden is no good if there are no access points to allow the animals in, so be sure to leave a few gaps in the bottom of fences. ■

© The Mammal Society



Uncommonly Common The Dormouse

Nibbled nuts found during country strolls mean one thing at this time of year: the dormouse is preparing for its winter sleep.

Throughout September this tiny rodent will be out during the hours of darkness searching under oak and hazelnut trees for high protein nuts to see it through the winter months.

Subsequently it will settle down for a six month hibernation, which usually lasts from October to April.

The dormouse has

orange-brown fur, large black eyes and a fluffy tail but, at up to 8cm long, is much smaller than a squirrel. It's an agile climber and spends much of its life in deciduous woodlands, hedgerows and dense scrub.

In the summer it builds its nest from bark stripped from honeysuckles, often siting it in a thorny bush to deter predators. Dormice, also known as *Muscardinus avellanarius*, produce up to seven young

at a time. It usually has one litter but can stretch to two if the weather conditions are in its favour.

Dormouse Licence Training Course

**Saturday, September 5,
9.30am-4pm**

Learn about dormouse ecology and conservation with Mick Peacey.

Venue: Sapperton Village Hall

Price: £100

More information: 01452 383333

Wildlife on Your Doorstep Roe Deer

Dawn or dusk are good times to spot roe deer, which tend to stick to covered areas during the day but come out under the safety of lower light levels to graze on roots, shoots and shrubs.

This shy animal, which has a red coat in summer turning to a warm grey in winter, is the smallest of Britain's native species. It has a distinctive black nose, a white chin and antlers and stand at between 60 and 75cm to the shoulder.

Male roe deer rut in July and August and the successful bucks mate with any females that enter their territories, although, uniquely, the implantation of fertilised eggs is delayed until December, with fawns being born in May or June.

Roes do not congregate in herds but form small family groups, with spotted fawns hiding in the bracken during their first two weeks before emerging into the open.

The Roe deer, also known as *Capreolus*

capreolus, was once a major source of food for people living in the UK, particularly the poor. In years gone by they were most commonly found in the north of England but are now more and more prevalent in large woodlands in the south.



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My Wild Life Hilary Allison

Hilary Allison, the busy head of public affairs for Gloucestershire Police and the county's Police and Crime Commissioner, loves being outside and close to nature.

Getting outside is my lifesaver really. I have a job that largely keeps me indoors, but my big joy in life is walking, and I run as well. There's nothing like an early morning run just around the area I live in Cheltenham, with the sound of birds in the background.

I have two dogs and there are some fabulous places to take them for walks around here, including Crickley Hill, Leckhampton Hill, the Forest of Dean, the Stroud valleys and the nature reserves looked after by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, of which I am a member. I love the Malvern Hills. I've walked on them since I was a child and what I love about them is the perspective they give: they make you realise that you're just a little dot on the landscape and that really helps me with my work. It's the bigger picture really: we're individuals in a huge environment and we are the caretakers or guardians of it. From the Malverns there are fantastic views of

the Severn plain, the Cotswolds and May Hill.

You can get back to basics when it comes to appreciating nature and the environment. I love hearing the sound of my walking boots on leaves in autumn or wild garlic in spring and often I see birds, squirrels and larger animals such as deer, cows and horses. I see a herd of alpacas on one walk and I have seen llamas too.

I used to enjoy walking long distance national trails when the dogs were younger and would love to walk the Cotswold Way again. Most of these walks are linear and there's something quite satisfying about doing such long distances, following an Ordnance Survey map and seeing things on it come to life as you walk.

We're incredibly lucky in Gloucestershire: we are close to so many amazing views and going out into the countryside costs very little. All you need is a good pair of boots and a mac and you can be at one with nature.



Hilary Allison



EVENTS THIS MONTH

National Moth Night

Wednesday, September 9,
7.30-11pm

Learn about different moth species and take part in moth trapping.

Venue: Whelford Pools
Nature Reserve

Price: £4 per person;
£12 per family

More information:
01452 383333 or info@
gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

Weekend Conservation

Sunday, September 13, 10am-1pm

Explore Whelford Nature Reserve, find out about how it's managed and have a go yourself.

Venue: Whelford Nature Reserve.

Price: £1 per person; £1.50 per family

More information: 01452 383333

Wallowing Around in the Dean

Friday, September 18,
7.30-9.30pm

Join Hayley Clayton for a talk on the history of wild boar, with details of their ecology and management and about research into the species.

Venue: Catholic Church Hall,
Cinder Hill, Coleford, GL16 8HN

Price: £2 including refreshments.

More information: 01594 510384

A walk through the heathlands of Tidenham Chase

Saturday, September 19,
10.30am-12.30pm

Join Kevin Caster, reserve manager for the Forest of Dean, for a walk across the beautiful heathland of Tidenham Chase

Venue: Meet at Offa's Dyke car park along B4228

Price: Donations gratefully received

More information:

01452 383333 or info@
gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

Gloucester Conservation Team

Friday, September 25,
10am-2pm

Join the team for a practical day. Minimum age 16.

Venue: Robinswood Hill Country Park, Gloucester. GL4 6SX

Price: Free

More information: 01452 383333

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is a countywide charity which manages 60 nature reserves covering over 2,500 acres. Its aim is to secure a natural environment which the people of Gloucestershire and visitors can enjoy for generations to come. Local membership numbers over 27,000 people and 500 regular volunteers give their time to support the Trust's work. Membership of the Trust costs from just £2.25 a month. Join online at gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk, tel: 01452 383333 or visit the Trust's Conservation Centre at Robinswood Hill Country Park, Gloucester. Registered Charity No. 232580. Follow us on twitter @gloswildlife



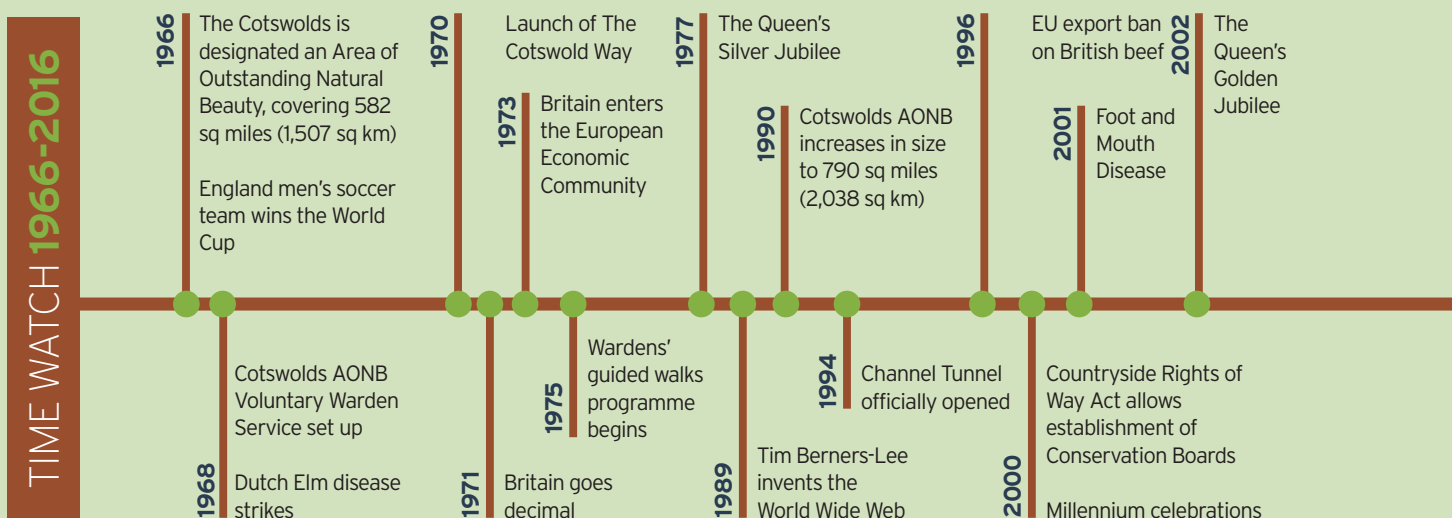
Gloucestershire



Caring for the Cotswolds

Celebrating 50 years

Next year is the 50th anniversary of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and there's lots planned to mark the occasion. Words by Siân Ellis



In 1966, the same year in which England won the Football World Cup, the Cotswolds was officially designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):

recognising it as one of the country's finest landscapes and a place to be looked after for future generations.

Whatever the national soccer team's fluctuating fortunes since (and the Lionesses' own-goal World Cup heartbreak in July), the Cotswolds remains a byword for quintessential rural England at its best, the famous limestone of its landscapes, buildings and dry stone walls creating a unique warmth and harmony across the region.

The largest of the family of 38 AONBs in England and Wales, the Cotswolds also embraces a rare diversity of landscapes and heritage: from wildflower grasslands to ancient beech woods; the giddy scarp to hidden valleys; Neolithic long barrows to historic houses and gardens; drop-dead gorgeous villages to market towns.

A new book featuring stunning pictures that tell the living story of the Cotswold landscapes will be a highlight of 2016

celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the AONB. Many special events are planned too, and, if you haven't already entered the anniversary photo competition, you've still time for a chance to win one of several fantastic prizes.

"So many people - farmers, tourism providers, master craftsmen, volunteers - are involved in keeping the Cotswolds thriving as a place to live, work, relax and visit," says Martin Lane, Director of the Cotswolds Conservation Board. "Next year's 50th anniversary gives us a wonderful opportunity to celebrate their efforts and reflect on what makes the landscape so special.

"Many changes have taken place in the past five decades, including in land management, and there are many challenges to face in the next five decades, whether balancing the needs of people with conserving the environment, or considering the effects of global climate change. It is a really exciting time and we hope everyone, residents and visitors alike, will join in anniversary activities."

Keep your eyes peeled for news and events in the coming months!

SHOOT TO WIN

What best captures the beauty and uniqueness of the Cotswolds AONB?

That's the question posed by 'Your Cotswolds' photography competition run by the Cotswolds Conservation Board in partnership with Cotswolds Tourism, to celebrate the forthcoming 50th anniversary of the AONB.

Open to amateur photographers and with a closing date of 30 November 2015, the competition has great prizes up for grabs, including a Canon EOS 700D 18-55 IS Kit worth £539 from Clifton Cameras, Dursley (adult section winner) and a full day's photography tuition out and about with Cotswolds-based photographer/filmmaker Nick Turner (under-16s section winner).

The runner-up in each category receives a training course worth £149 at Clifton Cameras on how to get the best out of your DSLR camera. Plus there are prizes for everyone who enters.

"The Cotswolds is a superb area for photography thanks to its fantastic range of landscapes, the escarpment, hills, farmland, wildflower grasslands, valleys and beech woods," says Dave Koblyanski from Clifton Cameras, one of the judges in the competition.

"The architecture of town and village, traditions like dry stone walling, rural fairs and recreational activities from walking to cycling all offer great opportunities to photographers."

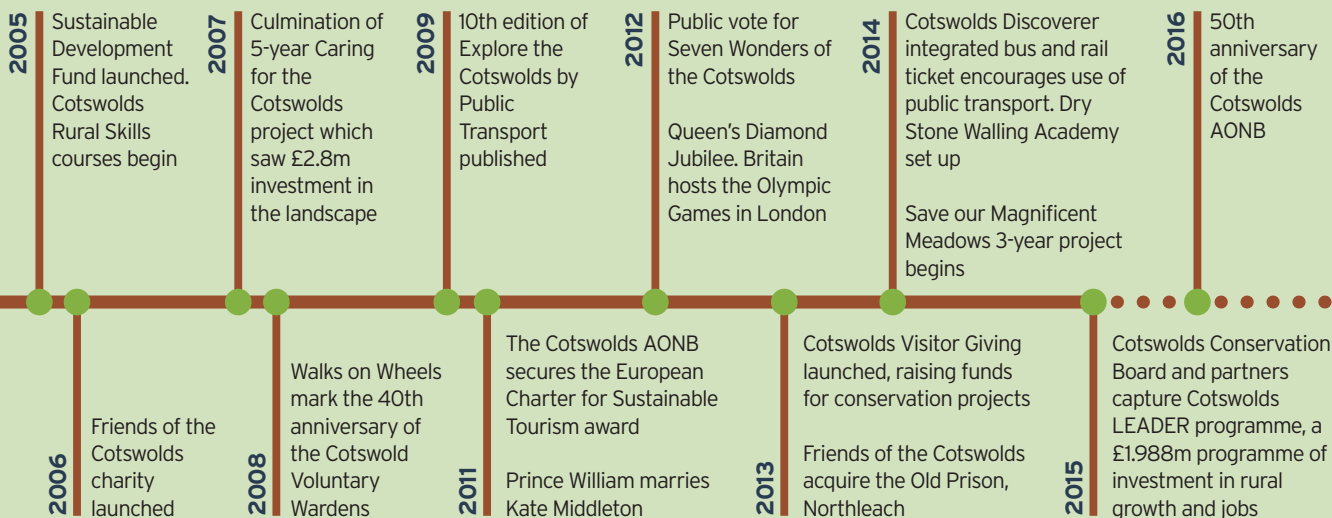
So what do you think best captures the beauty and uniqueness of the Cotswolds? For an entry form to the competition and full details on how to submit up to three digital images, visit www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ photography



For further details on the Cotswolds AONB and the Cotswolds Conservation Board Contact:

Cotswolds Conservation Board

The Old Prison, Fosse Way,
Northleach GL54 3JH
Tel: 01451 862000
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk
www.escapetothecotswolds.org.uk
www.cotswoldsruralskills.org.uk





Millions of people in England provide unpaid care or support to an adult family member or friend

Focus on...

The Care Act

The Care Act 2014 reforms the way in which adult social care and support is provided and financed. It tells councils across England what they

need to do if someone has social care needs and requires support in their own home or in a care home. Most will experience care of some kind in their lives; if not for themselves, this may be caring for a friend or family member.

The role of Healthwatch and other information and support services is to help people to help themselves, thereby preventing, delaying and reducing the need for care. Some of the Act is already in force, but some changes are not due until April 1, 2016.

Why change the law?

The previous system sometimes failed to live up to the expectations of those who relied on it and was often confusing, disempowering and inflexible. Demographic changes also mean that 1.4 million more people are expected to need care and support in the next 20 years.

It has been difficult for people using and working in the system to understand how the previous law affecting them worked. Over a period of 70 years it has been added to continuously and is now out of date and confusing. The new Care Act creates a single, modern law making it clear what kind of care people can expect.

What is the timescale?

The Act is divided into three main parts. This means that some changes are already in place, whilst others will not be until April 2016. In April this year, the following was introduced:

1. A new national level of care and support to be more consistently delivered across the country
2. New support for carers
3. Deferred payment agreements for care costs

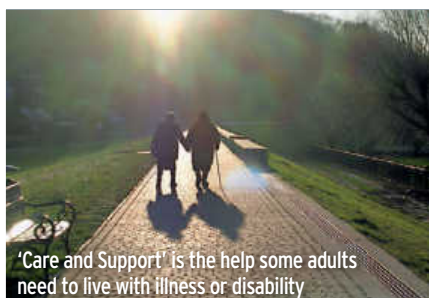
As part of the 2016 changes, more financial help will be made available, with a new form of protection from unlimited care costs. The Act will put a limit on the amount those receiving care will have to pay, with a cap beginning in April 2016.

'Care and Support'

'Care and Support' is the help some adults need to live with illness or disability. It includes help with getting up, washing, dressing, getting to work, cooking meals, eating, seeing friends, caring for families and being part of the community. It may also include emotional support, helping people who are caring for an adult family member or friend or even giving others a lift to a social event. Care and support includes the help given by family and friends, as well as support from the council or other organisations.

Eligibility

From April 2015, decisions made about the help people get will consider their wellbeing and what is important to them and their family. All councils will use the same national level of care and support needs to assess what they can provide.



This may result in someone being eligible for care and support, making it easier for them to plan for the future. It also means that wherever they live in the country, or plan to move to within England, if their needs meet the threshold, they will be eligible for support. If someone decides to move to another area, councils will work together to ensure there is no gap in care.

Anyone receiving care and support will be informed how much it will cost them to meet their needs and how much the council will contribute. They will have more control over how that money is spent and the council will put them in touch with the right organisation to support their wellbeing and help them remain independent for longer.

Carers

Millions of people in England provide unpaid care or support to an adult family member or friend, either in their own home or somewhere else. From April 2015, changes to the way care and support is provided means carers may be able to get more help to enable them to carry on caring, but also look after their own wellbeing. All carers will be entitled to an assessment of their own needs, irrespective of whether the person they care for has eligible needs.



Deferred Payment Agreements

From April 2015 deferred payment agreements will be available across the whole of England. Some people will be able to use the value of their home to fund care home costs without having to sell their home in their lifetime. If a person is eligible, the council will help to pay care home bills on their behalf, allowing the person to delay repayment until they choose to sell their home, or until after their death.

What is the cap?

This means that no one will have to pay more than £72,000 towards the care element of the costs of meeting their eligible needs in their lifetime. It applies to people funding their own care and support as well as those supported by the council.

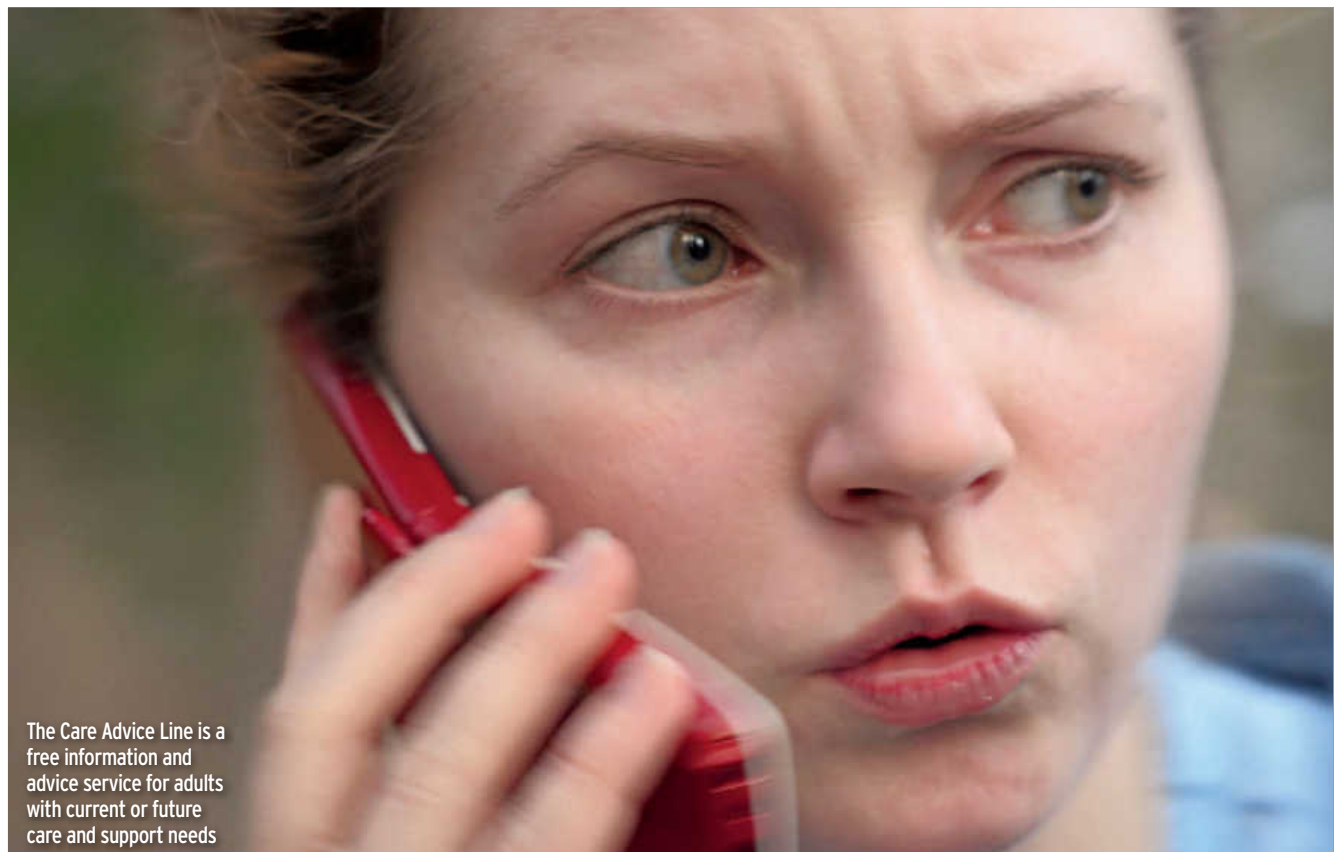
Independent Financial Advice

From April 1, 2015, the Council has a statutory duty to provide people with a need for care and support, with personalised information and advice. They are working with an independent organisation called 'The Care Advice Line' who provide this service. It is a free information and advice service for adults with current or future care and support needs, and their carers and families, helping them to make informed decisions about how they pay for their care and the impact this will have on their finances. Where appropriate, the service can help people to access professional advice. ■

For more information, please visit the Care Act pages of the Healthwatch Gloucestershire website at <http://bit.ly/HWGCareAct> or call one of our information advisers on 0800 652 5193

Gloucestershire County Council has also uploaded some Frequently Asked Questions onto the Care Act page of their website at <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/careact>

NB. Please note that this article was accurate at the time of writing but changes and delays may occur. Check the website pages above for more accurate information.



The Care Advice Line is a free information and advice service for adults with current or future care and support needs



at *è* *fn* *h* heart

No event at Blenheim Palace will be more moving or empathetic than Bel Mooney, talking about her latest book based on her Daily Mail advice columns

Blenheim Palace Festival of Literature, Film and Music September 25-28

Blenheim Palace's literature, film and music festival this year is packed with great names, from radio presenter Paul Gambaccini to Formula One veteran Max Mosley. But no event will

be more moving or empathetic than Bel Mooney talking about her latest book, *Lifelines, Words to Help You Through*. Based on her popular *Daily Mail* advice column, it brings together heartfelt problems, Bel's words of advice and wisdom, and some of

the inspiring quotations she includes each week. No stranger to tragedy and trauma herself, life, she says, is "complex, interesting, disappointing, frightening, puzzling, mundane - and as full of quiet desperation as blazing joy."

Bel, you'll be 'in conversation' with BBC presenter Ernie Rea at Blenheim; what sorts of things will you be talking about?

We'll be discussing my book, which is an anthology of a few years of my column. It includes letters, replies, some 'And finally' side-columns; and a very thoughtful introduction about what I have learned over the last 10 years of being an advice columnist. The experience has certainly changed me - my views of politics; my view of faith. I'm not as optimistic as I was; I find life much sadder now. Even though I'd been a journalist for years, I feel that I'd lived in a bit of a bubble before. Somehow, when you're on the receiving end of people's messes and woes, it has an effect on you.

Why did you decide to put this anthology together?

I want it to be an uplifting book. It's not structured into sections, such as 'Marriage'; it's fragments, if you like. The thing is, you might not look at a section on 'Bereavement' if you haven't lost anybody. But, if your husband has left you, you might find something very helpful when reading about a death because, in a sense, that is what has happened to you. I've also included lots of uplifting quotes; readers tell me they cut them out of my column and think about them. It's quite rich for a modest little paperback!

I've noticed you often look at the way people write, not just at what they're saying...

Perhaps having a literary training is just as useful as having a psychotherapy diploma. I got a first in English, and I'm tremendously attuned to the words people choose: the way they write. My lead-letter each week comes in at no more than 500 words; you won't find another advice column in the country that runs a letter that length. It's because I want the voice to be heard. I think that is so important.

You are very open about your own life and the difficulties you have faced. That honesty can't always have been easy.

When I first started this column, I met a well-known advice columnist at a party and tried to engage her in conversation about the sense of responsibility I felt. She waved dismissively and said, "Send them all off to counselling!" I thought to myself: "That's not good enough. They want to have something of you in your reply. They want to feel they are writing to a real

human being.' People do feel they know me because of some of the intensely personal articles I've written. They'll say, 'I know you weren't born with a silver spoon in your mouth'; or 'Your husband left you so you'll know how I feel'. I also get comments such as, 'I often think how lovely it would be if you lived next door and I could pop round to see you'. That's wonderful, and it wouldn't happen if you weren't giving.

Do we indulge our feelings too much nowadays? Have we lost pragmatism?

I know exactly what you're saying. I was born in 46 - a different era - and brought up with the kind of working-class people who would say, 'You've just got to get on with it!' Occasionally, I do confess to becoming exasperated when people seem so feeble. The good thing is that there's a widespread knowledge about feelings, and a lot of our unhappinesses are given names - like social anxiety - so they can be looked up online. The bad side is that, by naming them, you can lock yourself in rather than saying, 'I'm shy. What can I do about it?'

6 I do get huge joy out of my family, and nature, and the beauty of the world - huge, passionate joy

You include 'what happened next' to find out how some of those you advised fared. Do the results ever surprise you?

No, they don't! For example, I had a letter of guilt and grief about a long-ago abortion. I suggested to the woman that she should get a pretty box and put the name she was going to give the baby into the box; I said to light a candle and maybe bury the box. As a result, I got letters from people saying they'd carried out my little ritual and it was a weight off their shoulders. Then there was a guy who was full of depression: overweight, lived like a slob: a mess. Instead of saying, 'Poor you!', I told him to get his act together. One reader said it would have been my fault if he'd committed suicide. However, the guy wrote back to say he'd taken my advice, redecorated his flat, gone to the library to learn how to use a computer, met a woman there and now they're dating. He needed a bit of tough love.

Is there any letter that particularly sticks in your mind?

I once answered a letter on the page from a man who wanted to leave his wife and children for his love. I said, 'Don't do it!' One year later, another man wrote to me to say he'd read that letter when he'd been in the same position. As a result of the advice, he'd stayed with his wife. It had taken a year but they were so happy and so grateful to me. If that's one marriage saved, that's enough for me.

It must take its toll, hearing about other people's traumas and grief. How do you cope?

I've just had a mini crisis of mind, body and spirit in the past month, and this very evening I'm off to see a well-known psychologist called Linda Blair. Putting the book together made me look back in a concentrated way and I suddenly felt overwhelmed and very low. I don't mind people knowing that I'm vulnerable, just as they are. Suffering is part of the human condition. Having said that, when I'm at my best, I have a message of positivity. I do think life is wonderful; I do get huge joy out of my family, and nature, and the beauty of the world - huge, passionate joy. We all mess up; the fact that we're here for such a short time can make you feel very sad. But, at the same time, there is so much to balance that.

What's the best advice you've ever been given?

When I was first offered a job as an agony aunt - though I hate that title; it sounds so patronising! - I asked friends if I should do it. They all said, 'Bel, you're made to do that job!' I've had a fantastic career as a journalist; I've written six novels; I've written 30 children's books; I've done Radio 4 and the telly - but nothing feels to me as worthwhile as writing this column. I have a potential readership of six million and I am hugely proud of being able to reach out to those people and help. The inner conviction that you are doing something good is very sustaining. ■

Bel Mooney is in conversation with Ernie Rea at Blenheim Palace, The Marlborough Room, on Sunday, September 27 at 12 noon. For more a full programme of events, and to buy tickets, visit blenheimpalaceliteraryfestival.com



Bel Mooney's Lifelines, Words to Help You Through is published by The Robson Press, September 22, paperback £9.99

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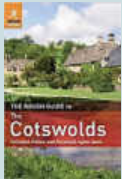
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The love of butterflies

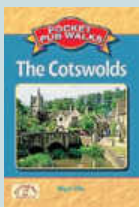
Helen Hewett of Suffolk Anthology reviews three of the latest releases



The Rough Guide to the Cotswolds by Matthew Teller

Rough Guides, £12.99

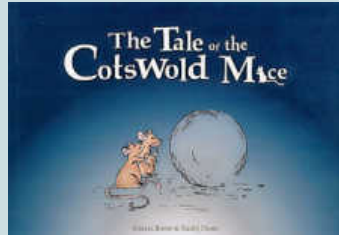
This interesting and readable guide to the Cotswolds gives full coverage of the region's highlights, and the author characterises each town and village wonderfully in his detailed descriptions. The guide reviews the Cotswolds' gastronomy, providing information for a fine dining experience for all preferences and budgets. The volume includes Matthew Teller's overview of his favourite activities, which range from llama trekking through the Oxfordshire countryside to marvelling at the stately home and park-like grounds at Blenheim Palace. An excellent, good-value way to discover new places and ensure that nothing is forgotten on your itinerary when exploring the Cotswolds - visitors and residents alike!



The Cotswolds - Pub Pocket Walks

by Nigel Vile
Countryside Books, £5.99

These 15 circular walks take you through the most picturesque scenery in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Routes range in length between 3 to 6+ miles and all lead to a traditional pub. This pocket-sized paperback includes a brief historic summary of the area and places of interest nearby which provide a magnificent backdrop, such as Sudeley Castle and Batsford Arboretum. Descriptions of the walk are straightforward, and are accompanied by an up-to-date sketch map and photographs which display delightful scenes en route.



The Tale of the Cotswold Mice

by Aneata Boote & Emily Dunn
£10.99, signed and including P&P, from www.cotswoldmice.com

Aneata Boote has created beautiful illustrations that tell a story themselves in Emily Dunn's special-edition children's book. The book is a tale of two mice, living in the authors' own studio in the small Cotswold town of Chipping Camden, and dreaming of living under the enchantment of a prince and princess's palace. Aneata and Emily both have a special focus on children's books and they "aim to find and stock books that you may not find in your regular bookshop!"

Pets come too!

Hudson's Media, £7.99
www.visitor-guides.co.uk

This handy tourist guide book takes a look at England's star-rated, pet-friendly places to stay. The guide features pubs in Gloucestershire, including The Amberley Inn and The Close B&B, both located in Stroud. They offer both large gardens backing onto country lanes, stone-mullioned windows and roaring log fires, perfect for both you and your pet. Similarly, the guide mentions The Talbot Inn located in Worcestershire, 'a picturesque rural location with beautiful local walking'. All pubs charge a reasonable price of £10 per pet, per night.



In Pursuit of Butterflies - A Fifty Year Affair

by Matthew Oates
Bloomsbury, £18.99

Matthew Oates works for the National Trust in Gloucestershire and is an expert on butterflies. I was fortunate to hear his talk about this book during the Stroud Festival of Nature and it reminded me of my childhood delight in butterflies - and indeed rekindled it. His book details his own childhood love of nature and is a celebration of British butterflies over the past 50 years, based on his detailed diaries. It is a fascinating book to dip in to, and learn more about the beauty of British butterflies - especially the rare purple Emperor.



Darkmere

by Helen Maslin
Chickenhouse, £6.99, age 14+

This novel by debut Cheltenham novelist Helen Maslin is a gothic romance written for older teenagers (and adults!). Kate and her friends are spending the summer at Darkmere Castle in Devon, and she is hoping to get closer to Leo, the coolest boy in school. Instead, she is drawn into the dark story of a 19th-century girl who haunts the tunnels and towers of the castle. I loved this book, reminiscent of Daphne du Maurier but with a strong contemporary setting and characters.



Lucky Us

by Amy Bloom
Granta, £7.99

Set in 1940s America, this novel draws the reader in with its vignettes of family life. Two sisters endure heartbreak and hard knocks in Hollywood, New York and London. A portrait of the world during the Second World War - but ultimately a tale of family and resilience. Amy Bloom writes beautifully, but there is also humour in this delightful novel.

All the books mentioned are available from new Cheltenham bookshop, Suffolk Anthology, based in the The Suffolks area of the town. **Twitter: @cheltanthology**

From La-La land to *London Road*

Cotswold Life columnist Emma Samms has written her first radio play – a gripping mystery-drama about a woman who has disappeared without trace.

Oh – and because Emma just happens to be a famous actress, she had no problem assembling the perfect cast! Katie Jarvis went to the first read-through of *Visitors*, premièred on BBC Radio Gloucestershire this month

Forty-two-year-old Alice Jenner was last seen four days ago. Gloucestershire Police are appealing to anyone in the Cherington area who might have information on her whereabouts. She is now officially listed as missing.

There's a plate of neatly-cut sandwiches on a table in an upstairs room at BBC Radio Gloucestershire's London Road offices. Jon Culshaw gives them an enthusiastic stare. "You just don't get this sort of service at Radio 4!" he says, sounding like neither William Hague nor Tom Baker.

In fact, he's here to play the role of a police officer in Emma Samms's new radio play, *Visitors* – "Somewhere between Gene Hunt and Sam Tyler." (For a second, it's hard not to picture him as DCI Gene Hunt in a red Quattro, chasing Elizabeth and Mr Darcy ("Hold it there, you great big costumed girl!") at full horse-power through the English countryside.)

"I usually do comedy stuff," he says, as he introduces himself to the rest of the cast, "but I'm relishing the opportunity to do something serious."

There's Georgie Oulton, a student at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and already a rising star. She and Emma have worked together before, on *Law of Moments*, a short film Emma wrote and directed, which is soon to be released.

Chad Horton is next to introduce himself to this newly-assembled group. He got to know Emma after they appeared together in pantomime at the Everyman four years ago. "Emma got me to do this by promising chilli and maybe a jacket potato. I'd do anything for chilli," he explains.



Lisa Maxwell, Jon Culshaw and Emma Samms at BBC Radio Gloucestershire

"Well, she got me on board with the promise of a few nude pictures!" chips in Mike Beckingham, Brimscombe born and bred.

"Actually," Emma corrects him, mock-sternly, "my only nude role ever was on radio. I played Boadicea."

Mike isn't in the room – he's in London, where he moved to pursue a burgeoning film career that has (genuinely) nothing to do with the fact that he's Simon Pegg's brother. He's talented, funny, charming, and currently being beamed in on Skype.

"Who do you want to see?" asks Dominic Cotter, one of the station's presenters, as he directs the computer camera at various parts of the room.

"I don't mind," Mike says. "You're all beautiful."

Looking slightly more nervous are the three am-dram cast members – Richard Murray, a Stroud Valleys estate agent, Dave Killington, a BT employee ("But I don't work on telephones; I don't want any complaints!"), and Annie McCallum, a specialist heart-nurse. "Annie is one of the first people to have been nice to me when I

moved to Gloucestershire," Emma explains. "Her job is the most important one of all – saving lives."

"So, if we have any heart problems, while we're here..." Richard clarifies.

Emma invited the three partly because she was determined that *Visitors* should be a truly local production; and partly because she's been to many of their shows and seen how fantastic they are. "Dave and I are currently appearing in a musical with the Cotswold Players," Richard says. "It's huge amounts to learn. The great thing about radio drama is that I don't have to memorise anything."

And then there's Claire Carter herself, the station's lunchtime presenter, who commissioned Emma to write this play. "I've wanted to produce a radio drama for a while now," she explains. "It's always been a bit of a passion – to find a great story, a local story, from local people for this local station." The idea was germinating in the back of her mind the day she interviewed Emma Samms on her show. "It was just a catch-up, reminiscing about *Dynasty*" [the prime-time US soap in which Emma starred, alongside Joan Collins, in the 80s].

During the interview, Emma began talking about her current focus on writing and directing. "And as she was speaking, live on air, in my head I was going, 'Ahh! Could this be the sign I've been waiting for?' It was the first time I'd met her, so I didn't want to pounce there and then. But I fired off an email soon afterwards, asking if she'd like to write something for us. Within two months, she'd come up with the first draft. I couldn't put it down."

What Claire wasn't bargaining on was being cast in the drama herself. As the read-through begins, she turns to me. "I've



Claire Carter, BBC Radio Gloucestershire

got butterflies now..." she whispers. She's playing Eve, a friend of missing Alice Jenner. "In fact, I'm shaking! *Shaking!*" She needn't worry; apart from accidentally reading one of Chad's lines, she's a natural.

The only cast-member not here (even on Skype) is actress and TV presenter Lisa Maxwell, who's stuck on a train. "But she's so experienced, she'll easily pick it all up," Emma says.

And so the read-through begins with the sound of cooking in a homely kitchen, as the police knock on the front door of Alice Jenner's parents, to break some disturbing news...

Acting

Emma Samms has an acting role in her new drama *Visitors*. "But that bit was more of a chore," she laughs. Nowadays, it's the directing and writing that she loves. "The writing part you can do at home in your pyjamas, which is enormously appealing. Writing is all about watching and listening - and that's always been my role in the world. When I was little, I'd be found at parties, at the top of the stairs, watching everybody."

There's no doubt that her many years of acting in prime-time soaps such as *General Hospital* and *Dynasty* ("Which years did they run?" I ask her. "I'd have to look it up!" she replies) have been great training.

"I know it sounds terrible but they

It's always been a bit of a passion - to find a great story, a local story, from local people for this local station."

taught me how not to write. I'd come across things that didn't work and I would look at why; and then I would try and fix them. "Interestingly enough, in the last year of *Dynasty*, there were only two actors who were allowed to change lines without permission from the producer, and I was one of them."

She's written before - including a full-length film, *His Bodyguard*, in 1998, in which she created a starring role for her then-boyfriend, the actor John Maucere, who is deaf (though the part eventually went to Anthony Natale): "Nobody was writing parts for deaf people who couldn't speak."

When Claire commissioned this latest drama, the only stipulation was that it needed to run in around 10-minute episodes, over five days. "So I started thinking about interesting and intriguing local themes," Emma says. "And I suddenly thought of the lady who washes my hair at Blushes, whose husband works for GCHQ. She doesn't have a clue what he does or

where he goes; sometimes, the only hint she has is that he comes back with a suntan!"

But let's not give any more away...

Although she's never previously written for radio - "Listening to *The Archers* has been my schooling" - the directing side comes naturally. And, as the read-through progresses, you can see exactly that. Emma relays her art subtly, allowing the actors gently to familiarise themselves with the script; any 'directing' is done with a confident but friendly and feather-light touch.

"As an actor, I'd constantly think, 'Ooh! If they just did it this way, it would be so much better!' But, of course, it would have been totally inappropriate to have said any of that. So, for me, it's a case of finally being able to say all the things I've been thinking for years and years."

And so the read-through unfolds, with barely a hitch. Exciting; suspenseful; mysterious, even on first hearing... Right until the cue for a one-off line from a Sergeant Burns sparks a profound silence.

"Who's Sergeant Burns?" asks someone.

"Ah!" Emma says, with a laugh. "I do believe I haven't cast him yet!" ■

Visitors by Emma Samms will be broadcast, Monday to Friday from September 7, on the Claire Carter show, 12-3pm, BBC Radio Gloucestershire; www.bbc.co.uk/radiogloucestershire



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Fascinated with fossils *the father of geology*

If you've ever mused on the traces of long-gone creatures embedded in the surface of our Cotswold stone, then you have the work of blacksmith's son William Smith to thank for solving some of the mysteries of our prehistoric past

Fossils have long been studied as great Curiosities collected with great pains at great expense and shown and admired with as much pleasure as a child's rattle or a hobby horse because it is pretty.

- William Smith 1796

William Smith was fascinated with fossils – well, who isn't? But as he went on to say, 'And this has been done by

Thousands who have never paid the least regard to that wonderful order and regularity with which Nature has disposed of these singular productions and assigned to each class its peculiar Stratum.' This is true, although, like me, there must be number upon end of us who wondered why our Cotswold stone has shells and the imprint of shells – brachiopods and ammonites in particular – embedded in the limestone. And just accepted that it all points to the ancient age of pre-recorded history when the waters covered the earth!

The eldest of five children of the village blacksmith, William Smith was born at Churchill in the Oxfordshire pocket of the Cotswolds, some three miles from Chipping Norton and six miles from Stow-on-the-Wold. Smith was only seven years old when his father died, and was brought up by his mother and his uncle, a local farmer at Over Norton. His was not exactly a rags to riches story, but it is of a working class boy whose education was at the village school, he was not in rags but the family had a struggle to survive the harsh times of being born into the 'labouring class': he certainly did not attain riches in the monetary sense, but fame did come in later life for his work in and extensive knowledge of the geological branch of sciences. The modest house where Smith was born in 1769 no longer stands; the site can be located by the recess in the wall in Junction Road, aptly named Spring Cottage from the time it stood close



Visitors looking at exhibits from William Smith's collection

to one of the five outlets which supplied water to the village.

Leaving school at the age of 11, William Smith showed an enquiring and intellectual interest in the numerous fossils found in the fields and stone walls around him and acquired as many books as he could not only on that subject, but built on his rudimentary learning at the village school, studying geometry and teaching himself the principles of surveying, mapping and colouring. One of the most interesting fossils that Smith found in his own locality was the round 'pound stone', the remains of an ancient race of sea urchins which left its star like appearance embedded in the stone. It got its name from the time it was used in local dairies for weighing butter.

The first dinosaur bone to be described in scientific literature (the femur of a *Megalosaurus*) had been found in a quarry in neighbouring Cornwell in 1676, and was the subject of an article in the Financial Times magazine in 2011. At the age of eighteen, William Smith became an

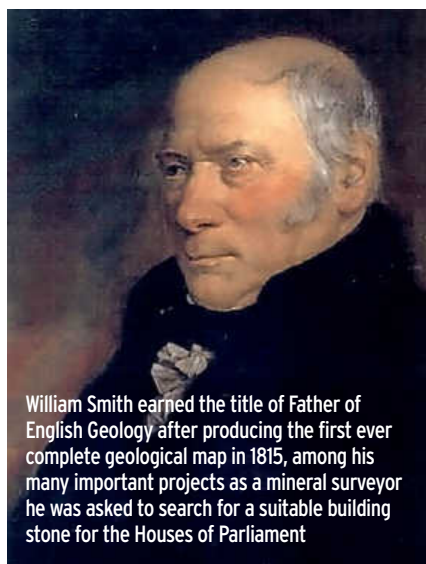
assistant surveyor to the master Surveyor, Edward Webb of Stow-on-the-Wold. Webb had been appointed to survey the parish of Churchill for the purpose of enclosure. Later Smith was required to travel all over England and by 1794 he had toured the entire country, examining rock formation and strata. He examined and recorded the fossils, finding those in a section of sedimentary rock were always in a certain order from the bottom to the top of the section. Such was the value of and trust in his work, that Webb took the young Smith into his own household to live with them at the Manor House in the middle of Stow, and soon entrusted him with all the business of a surveyor. It was during this time that Smith met Warren Hastings, the other famous son of Churchill, who became the first Governor General of India. Smith was involved in Warren Hasting's plans to landscape his estate at Daylesford. A memorial plaque on the house where he was born gives the date of his death as 1818. More rustic and monolithic, as



appropriate to a geologist, is the memorial to William Smith. Built of large blocks of local Chipping Norton limestone, the monument was erected by the 3rd Earl of Ducie in 1891. A new development of houses in Churchill is named William Smith Close, and so perpetuates the name of the village lad who became 'the father of English geology'.

Among his many projects, William Smith was able to drain and convert Prisleigh Bog into valuable agricultural land at Woburn for the Duke of Bedford. This was the springboard from which other major works launched Smith's career, by which time he had started his own business. To meet the demand of Industrial Britain for transporting massive amounts of coal and raw materials, the canal system was reliant upon good surveyors. Smith's detailed knowledge of different types of rocks brought him the contract to supervise the construction of the Somerset Coal Canal, to link the River Kennet and the Avon Canal. All the while and the result of travelling thousands of miles each year gathering every bit of geological data and studying fossils from all over the kingdom, Smith determined to realise his ambition of producing a geological map of England and Wales, identifying the layers of rock based on the fossils they contained rather than on their composition.

Unlike many geologists of the time, Smith had to earn his own living, but attracted the patronage of Sir Joseph Banks, the premier scientist of the day, the great naturalist who had accompanied Captain Cook on his famous circumnavigation of the globe and President of the Royal Society. As a landowner, Banks realised the economic significance of Smith's work and sponsored him, caring little for the class distinction of the day whereby, despite his reputation as outstanding in his scientific studies and learned papers, Smith was not invited to



William Smith earned the title of Father of English Geology after producing the first ever complete geological map in 1815, among his many important projects as a mineral surveyor he was asked to search for a suitable building stone for the Houses of Parliament

6 The Great Map brought him nothing. Penniless, Smith was still of the resilient Cotswold farm stock; strong of body and character

become a member of the Geological Society of London founded in 1807. His lack of university education whereby 'gentlemen' were versed in Latin and Greek and the fine arts, coupled with his country manners and roughness of local dialect did not sit well with the gentry who made up the original members. In any case, Smith would have been unable to afford their dinners. When his sister died, he had taken her seven year old son as his ward, repeating the cycle of his own childhood. John Phillips was an able and willing disciple and learned so much from his uncle that at the age of eighteen, Phillips became his assistant. He later became Professor of Geology at King's College, London, then at Oxford and a fellow of the Royal Society.

William Smith was able to solve the problem of the failed hot spring at Bath and was hailed as hero of the hour; this was in 1810 a year after his marriage, a rather mysterious chapter in his life. Smith had strong connections with Bath and during the time he had a regular income from the canal company, he lived at Tucking Mill, just south of the city. But the mortgage was high and his venture in nearby quarrying failed; his quest to find and identify fossils and record them in context of the strata

took up his every spare hour and money.

1815 was a significant year for Smith when his Great Geological Map of England and Wales was published by John Carey, the first large scale geological map of any country in the world. At a scale of five miles to the inch, comprising 15 sheets it measured six feet by eight and a half feet. It was an enormous feat but at a great personal cost forcing him to sell his beloved collection of some 2657 fossils, over two dozen of which were first named by Smith, to the British Museum for £500. There it was tucked away for 70 years until its significance was realised. Even that sale was not enough to keep his creditors at bay, and he had to endure the degradation and disgrace of a period in a debtors' prison. On his release his goods had been sold and his home locked against him.

The Great Map brought him nothing. Penniless, Smith was still of the resilient Cotswold farm stock; strong of body and character, used to walking great distances, so armed with his outstanding skill and a few tools of his trade, he found his way to Yorkshire where he worked on several commissions on different estates and improved the water supply to Scarborough. His intellect and achievements were appreciated more in his new home area and he helped design and set up the Rotunda Museum at Scarborough which became a centre for fossil pilgrims. It was reopened in 2008 after decades of shameful neglect. Honours were heaped upon Smith as his work became better known and valued for its invaluable contribution to geology and, by dint of associated sciences, his role in the development of the theory of evolution.

Smith's birthplace has now become a focal point of his importance in our heritage; a bicentenary exhibition with the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, including original maps, diaries and letter and specially recorded audio recordings, is open until the end of this month in the delightful setting of the chancel - the only remaining part of the redundant village church at Churchill. ■

The Heritage Centre (probably the smallest in Oxfordshire) is open on Saturdays and Sundays and Bank Holidays 2-4.30pm April to end of September. Free admission. There are leaflets available on circular walks around the parish, details on group bookings, and further information by calling 01608 658603 or on the website: www.churchillheritage.org.uk



Professor Hugh Torrens, Emeritus Professor at Keele University, by the plaque he unveiled in March this year to commemorate William Smith's birthplace in Churchill;

The *Dodgson* enigma

It's 150 years since *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was first published, written by Charles Dodgson - a shy Oxford mathematics lecturer - under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll. Katie Jarvis asked children's literature professor, Peter Hunt, more about this enigmatic man and his enchanting tales

PICTURES BY: ANTONY THOMPSON

*"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.
"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."
"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.
"You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."
Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**

Charles Dodgson, lecturer in mathematics at Christ Church, Oxford, could recall perfectly one magical day when he rowed a boat up-river, accompanied by the squeals and giggles of three delightful Liddell sisters, daughters of the college's esteemed Dean. It was, as you might imagine, a 'golden afternoon', the quiet ripples of the River Isis providing a murmuring background as the city of dreaming spires slipped past. For on that idyllic afternoon, Dodgson later wrote, "the cloudless blue above, the watery mirror below", *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was born, a fairy-tale told to excited children for whom a flustered white rabbit with a waistcoat pocket-watch was as real as the arching trees that shaded their meandering passage.

Thus the fact behind the fiction.

But, softly now...

For, as Peter Hunt writes in the Oxford World's Classic edition of this dearly-loved story, nothing in Wonderland is ever quite as it seems. In Dodgson's own diary, against the date July 4, 1862, he wrote in his clear, fluid hand, "On which occasion I told them the fairy-tale of *Alice's Adventures under Ground* which I undertook to write out for Alice, and which is now finished'. Yet anyone out in Oxford on that midsummer-day would have told you that the skies were a dreary grey; the temperatures disappointingly cool; and, as lunchtime drew to a close, the heavens opened.

Does it matter? Probably not. Even if the weather was wrongly-described, or the date misremembered, some kind of golden



Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

event assuredly had taken place: after all, memory's role is to shape events into more romantic form.

But we are left with an interesting truth. For while the Wonderland that Carroll invented is full of the strictest logic ("*Begin at the beginning," the King said, very gravely, "and go on till you come to the end: then stop."*), Dodgson's own story is full of paradox, mystery and contradiction.

Let's take a few examples. Lewis Carroll was a born entertainer: possessor of a jocular, brilliantly funny, inventive mind that could see the madness of the adult world from the unshakeable logic of a child's perspective: "The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday - but never jam today".

Dodgson, by contrast, was considered by many of his students to be the most tedious lecturer ever to have graced the dignity of

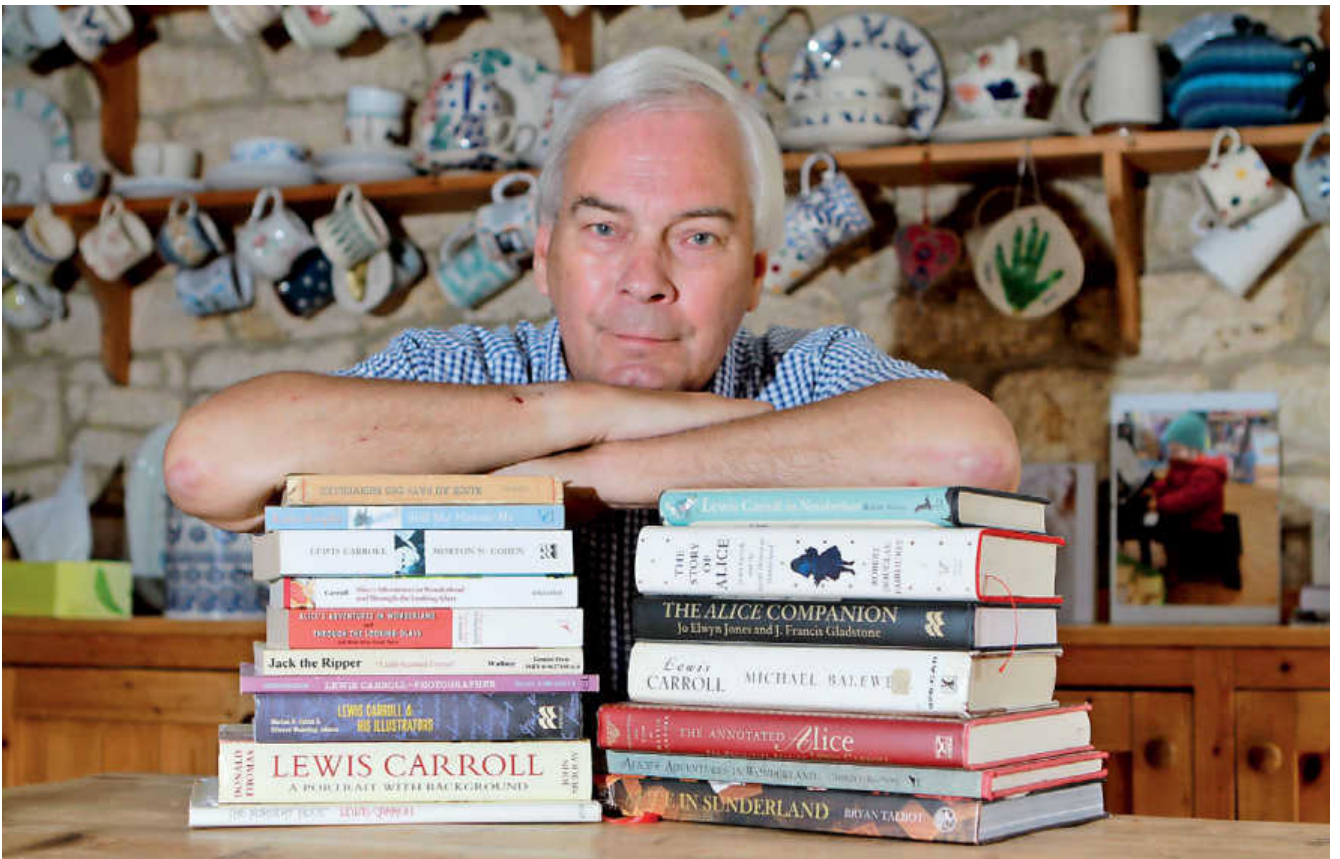
Christ Church's 16th century portals. Other contemporaries, such as the Rev W Tuckwell, recalled him as stiffly conservative, austere, stuffy, shy and often wrapped up in his own mathematical reveries: "he struck discords in the frank harmonious camaraderie of College life".

Such was his extreme piety, others report, he even forbade his illustrators to work on his books on Sundays. (Indeed, his own father, the Rev Charles Dodgson - who loved wit and humour - would never relate a story that even hinted at a pun on words from the Bible.)

And then there's the thorny issue of his undoubtedly skilled photographs. Somehow, he managed to capture small children at their most guileless. Wide-eyed, they stare into his lens with unafraid innocence... even when semi-nude, dresses falling from shoulders (such as Alice Liddell herself, artfully draped in rags as a beggar girl). Some are naked... Not snaps that would be tolerated in today's society, that's for sure.

So what might we - upright citizens of the 21st century - have made of him? Peter Hunt, Professor Emeritus in children's literature, has spent years studying Alice, in his former offices at Cardiff University and in his study at home in Nailsworth. He agrees Dodgson was brilliant, odd and contradictory; but he has little time for 'paedophile' jibes.

"I don't think I would have liked him, but I absolve him of being creepy with little girls," he says. "Clearly, he liked children but you can't judge someone by today's standards. Sometime in the last 15-20 years, our society has shifted - in my view



Professor Peter Hunt with just some of his collection of books about the writer Lewis Carroll

disastrously - from an open, caring society to a frightened, suspicious one. A good example of this comes from the Puffin edition of *Alice* [published 1946 with an introduction by Eleanor Graham]. It tells of how Dodgson used to carry safety-pins when he went to the seaside, so that he could hitch up the dresses of little girls who wanted to paddle. In 2015, that sounds like a perversion and you'd probably be arrested for it. But in the 1940s, they just didn't see it that way."

Ye-es. But we know Dodgson wasn't a complete ingénu. He himself campaigned against the sexual exploitation of children: he knew these things went on, yet he took revealing photographs of children. We're not in the Garden of Eden, here.

"No, we're not. But the Victorians had a different concept of child beauty than we do. They would see a naked child as innocent and pure. Look at naked classical art - is that perverted now?"

On the side of innocence, there is no suggestion that Alice ever looked back with anything other than fondness on the man who'd take her and her sisters back to his rooms (accompanied by their nurse, of course) to amuse them with stories and pose them for photographs.

On the stranger side, there's the case of the notorious missing diary pages. Some person unknown - possibly Dodgson

himself - cut out a series of entries that relate to an unexplained break he had with the Liddell family, after which both sides kept their distance. A scandal of some kind seems obvious - though some postulate that it was their governess to whom he had paid unwanted attention.

"That is a problem: What are those pages about?" Peter Hunt agrees. "Though, in fact, some of the things that were crossed out in the diaries by nieces and nephews were not necessarily offensive. We also have to remember that Kipling's wife burned all his letters and diaries, so it wasn't an uncommon act.

"But my view about Dodgson, which is based on the books themselves, is that he had a genuine, sentimental love for a small girl. Episodes such as the White Knight [one of Alice's absurd but kindly rescuers in *Through the Looking-Glass*] indicate that very strongly."

What is clear is that writing for children unleashed a part of Dodgson - a part that ensuing generations have found delightful - that could find no expression elsewhere. The stuffy mathematics lecturer, accused of bad taste, celebrity-chasing (he was allegedly star-struck by glitterati such as Tennyson) and a maudlin love of pathos, could let his brilliant brain soar when accompanied by children, afloat in a boat, bobbing on a river away from the adult

world he knew. And so it did. So many of the concepts and even words he came up with have entered our vocabulary as standard issue. The idea - as the Red Queen explains to Alice ("*My dear, here we must run as fast as we can, just to stay in place. And if you wish to go anywhere you must run twice as fast as that.*") - of a moving landscape has been commandeered by scientists to describe the evolutionary arms race. Hardly a day goes by without a media commentator marvelling over Government absurdities as 'Alice in Wonderland' politics. The Mad Hatter, Cheshire Cat (supposedly Dodgson himself: a joke alluding to his birthplace, in the vicarage at Daresbury), and the terrifying Queen of Hearts ("*Off with their heads!*") are characters embedded in the English psyche. And not just English, either. As Peter Hunt points out, the book has been translated into Russian by Vladimir Nabokov (make of that what you will; the Italians had a field day, adding to their edition the subtitle, *A Victorian Lolita*); even Icelanders and Aborigines have it on their shelves, with subtle cultural variations - a kangaroo for a white rabbit in Australia, for example.

For Peter, the reason why it has longevity and all-round appeal - apart from its sheer entertainment value - is simple: it changed the world. ▶

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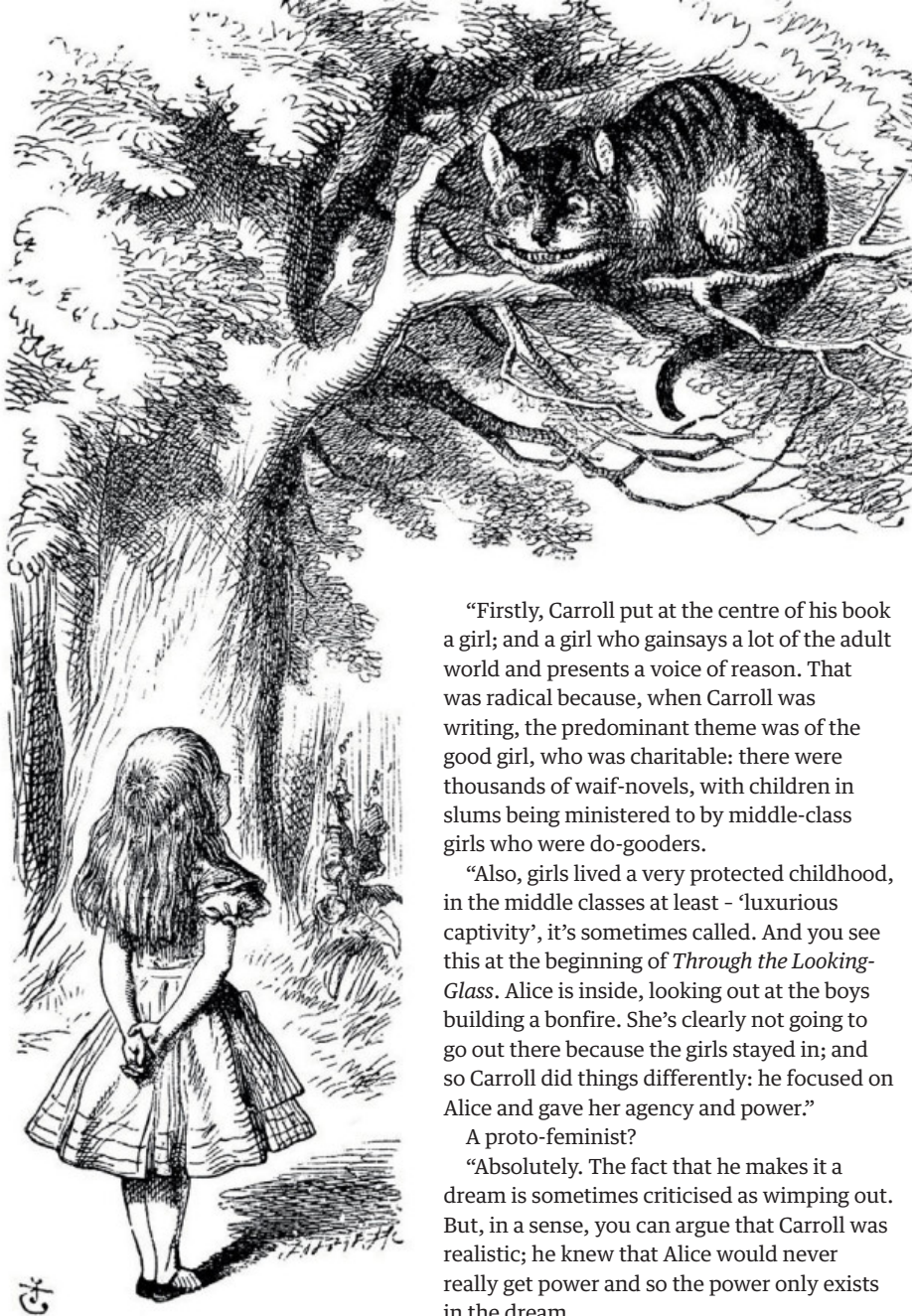


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Charles Dodgson,
aka Lewis Carroll

“Firstly, Carroll put at the centre of his book a girl; and a girl who gainsays a lot of the adult world and presents a voice of reason. That was radical because, when Carroll was writing, the predominant theme was of the good girl, who was charitable: there were thousands of waif-novels, with children in slums being ministered to by middle-class girls who were do-gooders.

“Also, girls lived a very protected childhood, in the middle classes at least - ‘luxurious captivity’, it’s sometimes called. And you see this at the beginning of *Through the Looking-Glass*. Alice is inside, looking out at the boys building a bonfire. She’s clearly not going to go out there because the girls stayed in; and so Carroll did things differently: he focused on Alice and gave her agency and power.”

A proto-feminist?

“Absolutely. The fact that he makes it a dream is sometimes criticised as wimping out. But, in a sense, you can argue that Carroll was realistic; he knew that Alice would never really get power and so the power only exists in the dream.

“What he also did was to alter perspectives. In real life, adults were in control: they were right; children were wrong. Alice says, No! It’s the other way round! All the characters she meets, except possibly the Knave of Hearts, are eccentric, rude, rule-bound, irrational adults.”

Carroll also, Peter says, changed pious attitudes to education, unashamedly parodying it and poking fun, paving the way for school-comedy books such as *Billy Bunter* and even Arthur Ransome’s adventures, where education is conspicuous by its absence.

Of course, neither did adult literature escape this influence: *The Third Policeman*, *Catch-22* and *Finnegans Wake* are just some of the love-children Alice helped spawn.

So what of Dodgson? Perhaps he will ever remain an enigma wrapped in a mystery; some have been so perplexed by his character, one book even seriously argued a case for him being Jack the Ripper. Yet many such theories overlook his kindness and generosity. The discovery of old bank account records in 2006

showed him to be a genial man, who quietly supported his unmarried siblings after the death of their father. Although there’s not a mention of it in his diaries, that support continued throughout his life.

Nor was it an easy life. His mother died two days after he started at Oxford in January 1851. And - whether or not he was genuinely religious - his beloved academic life precluded marriage; the edict was bachelordom and holy orders. He managed to avoid becoming a full priest, claiming shyness and a stammer as evidence of unsuitability. Genuine excuses?

“Well, his reasons never seem particularly convincing to me,” Peter says. “And, certainly, if you read *Alice*, as people have, as a nihilistic book, there is no good in it; there’s no redemption; there are none of the standard Christian messages at all. Indeed, there is plenty of violence; there are constant threats - of loss of identity and of beheading; and, in the second book, Alice is almost pre-determined; she can’t make any choices herself. As one critic said, it’s like looking over the abyss into the Pit of Nothingness.”

Yet a nothingness that has created so much, from Disney films to scientific concepts. As Peter Hunt says, we dismiss *Alice*, and children’s literature in general, at our peril. These books, with their often-pretty illustrations, are far from being dandelion seeds borne on a golden summer breeze.

“We are most of us built from children’s books,” he says. “We are the house they made. By marginalising them, we dismiss a whole stratum of history and culture that helps explain exactly who we are.”

“Who in the world am I? Ah, that’s the great puzzle.” ■

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and *Through the Looking-Glass* by Lewis Carroll, with introduction by Peter Hunt, Oxford World’s Classics edition, is published by Oxford University Press, paperback £6.99

Peter Hunt is also co-author, with Laura Tosi, of *As Fit as a Fish, the English and Italians Revealed*, published by Patrician Press

6 Hardly a day goes by without a media commentator marvelling over Government absurdities as ‘Alice in Wonderland’ politics

The rebel priest with red hair

Born in Cheltenham in 1881, and brother of Antarctic explorer
Edward, Rev Jim Wilson's 'revolutionary' views gained him
enemies and his own personal demons

WORDS BY: SHEILA JOHNSON

“A rebel priest with red hair” was how the Rev Jim Wilson was once described by his son, Michael.

Youngest brother of Cheltenham’s famous Antarctic explorer, Edward Wilson, Jim was born in Cheltenham in 1881 and educated at Cheltenham College before going to Caius College, Cambridge.

Deciding to go into the ministry of the Church of England, he was ordained at Lichfield Cathedral in 1904, becoming assistant curate at Stoke Parish Church the same year. It was while he was curate-in-charge at the nearby St Paul’s in Stoke that he met and married Norah Crump, the daughter of the former Stoke Rector.

At first, Jim was a fairly traditional Anglo-Catholic but during the period in which he was vicar in Wolverhampton (1912-1920), while praying one evening he imagined he saw a man standing near one of the church pillars dressed in working clothes. Believing it to be a vision of Christ, he asked the Bishop for a living in a poor area and was transferred to Sneyd in Burslem, one of the pottery towns. There his eyes were opened to the terrible poverty of the people and both what he saw and his relationship with Conrad Noel, a left-wing vicar from the parish of Thaxted in Essex, helped to change his views.

Jim became a revolutionary working for the overthrow of the political system of his day and, as he saw it, seeking God’s justice for the oppressed. Within six months, many of his church’s middle class attendees had left because of Jim’s outspoken beliefs and involvement in local politics. Sneyd Parish became notorious for its uncompromising radical congregation of miners and unemployed. The Rev Jim



often spoke out publicly in the town’s market place and joined in marches with the unemployed. But he also put his views to practical use, instrumenting a fund called ‘the common purse’ to which all members of the congregation who could afford to, contributed. This helped many of the poorest members when they were in particular need.

His son, Michael, remembered his father on the phone one day to the Lord Mayor about a family in his parish who had been evicted from their home - “You wouldn’t do this to a dog,” he was heard to say.

Yet there was another gentler side to the man who tried to bring something of the beauty and magic of the countryside near Burslem into his sermons.

His son, Michael remembered family times together too, especially their yearly holiday in North Wales.

“Father taught us to bait a hook and fish,

to spin for mackerel and to treacle trees for moths,” he said.

He goes on to say how his father would often return from fishing in the early hours of the morning, “singing *Oh Lucky Jim* at the top of his voice in case the Welsh farm dogs should mistake his purpose in homing so late.”

However, things were soon to turn ugly for the young passionate priest of the small pottery town. His standpoint, especially during the General Strike of 1926, had made him many enemies.

Then in 1932, the *Morning Post* published photographs of the Red Flag in his church and Lenin’s picture on the vestry wall. There was also a manifesto in the church porch in which the words communism and Holy Communion were closely allied.

The paper wrote, “Here in a consecrated shrine of the Church of England a vicar and his flock have been aiming at revolution.”

Another anonymous writer declared: “Either you should be confined in an asylum or hounded out of the Church of England.”

Jim wasn’t hounded out of the Church of England but the strain of opinion against him nearly led him to an asylum. He suffered a nervous breakdown under the mounting pressure and left Burslem, struggling with terrible depression over the next three years which at times brought him close to suicide. He subsequently claimed the main reason for his recovery was due to the calming and loving influence of his wife, Norah.

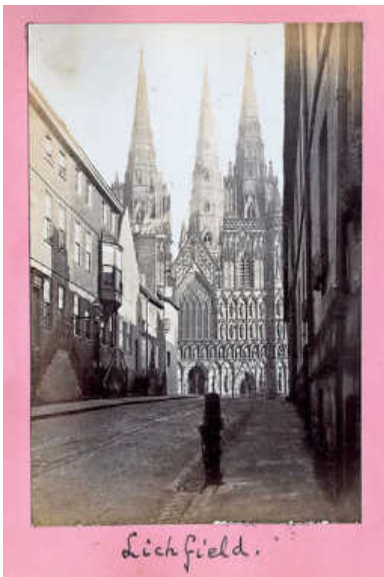
The second half of his ministry began in 1935, where he worked as a part-time chaplain in Napsbury Hospital, St Albans. It seems ironic that a man scarcely over a nervous breakdown was appointed to such a position but the work seems to have



A typical march in the pottery town, with the red flag showing



Jim and his wife Norah in 1932



Lichfield Cathedral, where Jim was ordained



Caius College, Cambridge, in Jim's time

enabled him to channel his energies into pastoral care.

During a further five-year stint as a vicar of the parish of St Mary's, Somerstown, in north west London, Jim seemed to recapture some of his earlier zeal for politics and succeeded in inspiring a new group of people with his radical views, but the social scene there was rather different and his years at St Mary's just an echo of those at Snedey.

A new opportunity then opened up for him as chaplain of The Guild of Health in London.

Founded in 1904, the Guild is the oldest known establishment for Christian Healing in the UK and had already existed for nearly half a century before the Rev Jim took up the post of chaplain at the age of 66. But he gave it work new power and direction, helping to establish its base at Edward Wilson House in London. From here he began a new ministry of preaching, healing, teaching, broadcasting and writing. He broadcasted a regular slot on BBC Radio's *The Light* programme called the 'Silver Lining' from 1952-1956 and wrote several books on healing, one based on the programme.

These were: *Father Jim's Silver Linings* (1958) *Healing through the power of Christ* (1946 reprinted 1969), *Redemption of the Common Life* (1950), *Purpose* (about 1955), *First steps in meditation for Young People* (1957), *Growth in Prayer with meditations for a year* (1960 reprinted 1980), *Go preach the Kingdom, heal the sick* (1962) and

Meditation and the Fullness of Life (1974).

The Guild of Health is still in London but now has its offices attached to St Marylebone Parish Church.

Jim officially retired at the end of 1957, although he continued to assist the Priest at St Anselm's in Middlesex for the next six years until his beloved wife, Norah died in 1963. In spite of increasing deafness, Jim remained active right up until his death in 1972. He was a prolific letter writer both to his friends and colleagues, as well as the elderly, sick and bereaved with many

finding his letters a source of help and strength. He was still taking his meditation groups up to a fortnight before his death and assisting the priest at All Saint's Church in Harpenden, Hertfordshire.

The priest-in-charge there at the time, Roger Davis, remembers very clearly his last visit to Jim

who was by now in one of the local hospitals. On asking him how he was feeling, Jim, knowing that his hours were numbered replied, "Do you know, Roger, I'm really feeling quite excited."

Jim may have had his enemies in life but he didn't seem to see death as one of them. It was not something to be feared for him but the start of the next great adventure. ■

With thanks to Dr David Wilson, grandson of the Rev Jim Wilson, and the Guild of Health for their help in supplying the information for the article, and Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum's archives for supplying the photographs.

6 Jim became a revolutionary working for the overthrow of the political system of his day

Where *angels* fear to tread

Sir Nicholas Soames will be talking about his grandfather, Winston Churchill, at Gloucester History Festival this month, in this, the 50th anniversary year of Churchill's death, and the 75th of him becoming Prime Minister. Katie Jarvis asked him (a little) more

GLoucester History Festival September 5-20

There's an obvious comparison between this interview and the life of Sir Winston Churchill. In Churchill's case - as his grandson, Sir Nicholas Soames tells me - had his story ended in 1939, the great man would have been classed by British historians as a failure.

But let's save that comparison for a moment...

My mission is to write a piece previewing Sir Nicholas's appearance at Gloucester History Festival this month, when he will give a talk entitled *Growing up a Churchill*. Excellent stuff.

The problem is this. I'm told he can only speak to me at 3pm on a certain Thursday afternoon. And when I do phone, bang on the money (so precise was the directive, I do a countdown), Sir Nicholas is in an almighty rush.

"We need to do this as quickly as we possibly can, to be frank, because I've got exactly three-and-a-half hours left in my office before I go on holiday."

R-i-i-g-h-t... So let's rush in - angels and all that - with a wonderful story I've read about Sir Nicholas, then a chubby five-year-old, discovering he had a rather important grandfather. The charming anecdote revolves around the young lad making his way into Churchill's bedroom at Chartwell and...

I hope, I suggest to Sir Nicholas, winningly, that he doesn't mind repeating it for me.

"No, I don't!" he says, while not repeating it. "That's really not... I mean, I was 16 when my grandfather died so I wasn't an adult and, sadly, for the last two or three years of his life, he was a very old man so I never settled the world with him. But, of course, I knew him just as a child and as a very affectionate grandfather."

Indeed - so what other memories does he have?

"None that I'm going to tell you now because I'm going to save them for the talk," he says, brooking no argument.

I brook one anyway. "Oh! That's rather unkind!"

"No, it's not."

"But I've got to put something in my article."

"You can just say it's going to be marvellous."

(That makes me chuckle. But you've still got a while to wait for our 1939.) So I ask instead about Churchill's own pre-1939 war experience (Cuba, Afghanistan, The Sudan - where he took part in the last cavalry charge of the British army - South Africa). Sir Winston used his connections not to

6 My grandfather's words were his great friend. The two things he was always very good at were English and history

obtain promotion but to visit some of the most dangerous spots in the world. How did that help him as a war leader - and do our own leaders lack that kind of first-hand experience when making decisions nowadays?

"Can you imagine," Sir Nicholas replies, tartly, "if I announced to the members of Mid Sussex, my constituency council, that I was going to go off and fight in a war for three weeks for fun and then come back! It doesn't happen now; we don't have an Empire. We don't indulge in these great punitive expeditions; so the answer is, you couldn't possibly have someone who had that much experience of life as it was then."

We've not finished the argy-bargy yet. We have more, over Churchill's wonderful

use of language, in which we both accuse the other of misunderstanding questions. But then, finally - after our war has broken out - successes on all sorts of fronts come thick and fast. Thank god.

The first breakthrough concerns Churchillian rhetoric. I unexpectedly heard a speech only the other day and - despite it having no direct relevance to me - I was moved beyond measure.

Ah yes, Sir Nicholas agrees. "My grandfather's words were his great friend. The two things he was always very good at were English and history. He read very extensively when he was in the army in India - read the whole of Macaulay; he read all the French classics in French. He read every book he should have read to master the history of his country and the world. And, from that, he derived his tremendous love of words. And his extraordinary vocabulary."

Sir Nicholas is also with me on the horror of so many of today's children having so little knowledge of this greatest of Britons.

"We've already lost the teaching of history, unfortunately, but there are two books that every child, in my view, should read. One is Boris Johnson's biography - a brilliant, brilliant work. And the other is my grandfather's own book, *My Early Life*. If you want to learn about Victorian history and an extraordinary life at the turn of empire, you should read that.

"But," he rightly complains, "children don't get a chance in school to learn that kind of stuff. They learn about THE Romans or THE Nazis or THE this or THE that. The great thing is: if you read Churchill's life, you read about the history of England for two centuries."

The funny thing is, despite all the tough gruffness, I do quite take to him. If you stand firm against the thundering, the sun does start to come through the clouds. Even though I nearly blow it by asking



about Churchill's struggle with depression.

"He didn't have a struggle with depression! There's nothing to talk about! Absolute rubbish!" (There's a fascinating article backing this up on the Churchill Centre website, called *The Myth of the Black Dog*.)

He's also interesting on the wider Churchill story which, after all, tends to get eclipsed by the war years. Because, of course, we've so much more to thank Churchill for: house-building; a focus on hygienic living conditions...

"The whole benefits system. He had an extraordinary back-story. One of the best biographies ever written of him was called *A Study in Failure* by Robert Rhodes James, which ends in 1939. It was only in 1939/40 that the House of Commons started listening to Churchill. And the minute they started listening, they understood the nature of the problem and - like the Brits always do - they rallied behind him. But it was a narrow call."

6 It's not where you've come from - it's where you're going to that matters in life.

There are other interview highlights - my particular favourite being during our discussion on having famous forebears, which Sir Nicholas concedes is a double-edged sword. He's very honoured, he says, but, "It's not where you've come from - it's where you're going to that matters in life. If people don't like it, well, they can bugger off, frankly."

So let's try to get this back to the personal - the focus of the talk, after all. If Sir Nicholas (I ask with a certain trepidation; I have to be honest with you here) could see his grandfather one more time, what would he most like to ask him?

"That's a very good question. Nobody's ever asked me that before. If I saw him for

one last time, I suppose I would ask him what his view was of the way the world was shaping. I can't tell you what it would have been, but it would have been a very well-informed view. Of course, he would have been very anxious, as he always was, about Britain's relationship with the Americans...

"Listen, Katie, I've got to go. Sorry I've been so hurried."

No problem. I had been intending to write this as a straight, factual question-and-answer session - but that would have been a waste. I hope this, instead, gives some indication of the treat in store: a speech that promises more anecdotes than I managed to extract. And a true flavour of personality. ■

On Monday, September 14, Nicholas Soames will be one of three speakers celebrating Churchill From All Angles, at Blackfriars Priory, Gloucester, as part of a week-long series of history talks; gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk

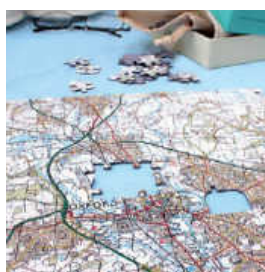


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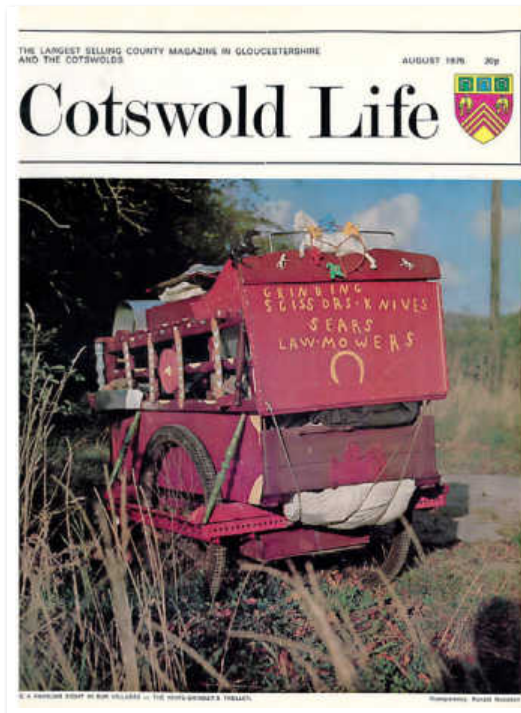
Cameos from the archive

The roads less travelled

Resplendent in red, on the front cover of *Cotswold Life*, August 1975, is the evocative photograph of a knife-grinder's trolley, bedded down at the side of a country lane. A gloriously ramshackle affair, the whole is other than the sum of its many parts, cobbled together from angle iron, table legs and hand-me-down wood, capped with model horses and a child's abandoned windmill.

The arresting image is a bucolic throwback to a distant time and place, and its slightly drunken character brings to mind the inimitable Chesterton: 'The wild thing went from left to right and knew not which was which'. Much charm and beauty lies in its naivety, with distinctive yellow-painted signage on its headboard declaring to blunt punters: 'Grinding scissors. Knives. Sears. Law mowers.' Door-to-door knife grinders maintained that they could tell the measure of the cook by the angle of the wear on the knife.

For many years, a Romany caravan has created a tranquil tableau on the grass verge at the side of the road into Bourton-on-the-Water, accompanied by several *laissez-faire* horses tethered on alarmingly long rope halters. The appeal of such a scene is achingly obvious: the pace of life is slow, measured, with time not only to stand and stare but also to live and breathe the natural order of the world. Motorists with a deadline, extreme truck drivers outwitting restrictive tachographs, and stressed executives with heads full of end-user agreements all hurtle along the A429, their peripheral vision not even registering the still life on the green. Everything now is about speed, and targets within targets, as the dashes of triple transporters join the dots on schedules, like freighters' Morse code. No sooner has a desire for a commodity come to mind, we expect it to be available, before our synapses have transmitted the order. The personal touch has slipped beneath the murky waters of cold consumerism, to join the wreckage of individuality and character.



6 Door-to-door knife grinders said they could tell the measure of the cook by the angle of the wear on the knife

In the village where I grew up, the local baker delivered warm, crusty bread and trays of cream-heavy cakes in a battered old green Austin van. Sweet, yeasty aromas from the confines of the vehicle as he opened the rears doors wrapped me in a cloying contentment. There are still a few Cotswold bakeries that can bring dough to your door, and whilst there may be a courier somewhere in the middle where the jam used to be, it is a flavour of a lost tradition. The wonderful Hobbs House, Whiddett's and Huffkins, to name but a few, have a harvest of wonderful breads to exalt the simplest of meals.

When milk used to be delivered to virtually every house, it was a childish delight in winter to see an inch of frozen cream pushing off the red foil bottle top. My late husband recalled the sight of the

local farmer on a progress through the village, ladling thick, untreated milk directly from the churns into hastily convened receptacles.

With the rise of car ownership in the 1960s and 70s, households had the freedom to shop further afield, releasing them from a kind of geographical sumptuary law. People were overwhelmed by the sheer variety of goods on offer: Hobson's choice met indecision, and found it wanting. Nowadays, we don't even have to leave our sofas to bring home the bacon; a few clicks will summon the prosciutto to the fridge door.

When goods were brought to the local neighbourhood, back in the 1960s, there was communality in the air. Fast-forward half a century and the only portent of a shopping delivery is the clunk of a metal door and the shuffling of orders. A front door opens, an inane banter fills the void hovering over the selection of 'Jazz' rather than 'Pink Lady' and the assignation is at an end. Job done. There is no discussion about mother's dodgy hip, no eye contact, let alone the brush of a hand. This is the delivery suite, and simple. There are few services now that cannot be ordered from home, so why bother getting in the car, finding somewhere to park, and dodging the traffic warden's beady eye. It's a lot of trouble for a packet of penne.

Insularity from our fellow 'service users' - that appalling moniker which debases us into units of consumption - may lighten the daily grind, but it weakens community. No more does the baker's van assault our sugar receptors; milk is still brought to the door, but climate warming now leaves it simmering gently in the porch. The nearest we get to a traditional echo of the past is the ear-splitting clapper of an ice-cream van. Delivery vehicles had a magnetising effect, a genius loci that attracted people to pore over the random goods of the day. Choices made, the flock would murmur the disquiet in their lives, exchange sympathies, and return to their homes, with full baskets and a slight leavening of the soul. ■

Grace and favour

To mark the centenary of WG Grace's death, a Cotswold craftsman has created a rather special tribute to the great cricketer's memory

WORDS BY: TRACY SPIERS

He has gates, a society, a lunch and a room named after him, but never once has he appeared in person - until now. That all-familiar strong frame, huge beard and commanding clutch of the cricket bat has all been captured to perfection. He may only be 23 inches high, but WG Grace now belongs at the place which earned him a reputation of being a first-class cricketer - the home ground of Gloucestershire County Cricket Club in Bristol.

This mini Grace, exquisitely carved from a block of lime wood has been carefully and masterfully created by a Slad Valley craftsman, Simon Cooper, as a tribute to mark this year's centenary of WG Grace's death (October 23).

This special sculpture was commissioned by Peter Lapping, a member of the cricket club, who felt it was about time Dr Grace was brought to life in figurative form.

"We have the Grace Gates, the Grace Room and the Grace Society and every year we have a Grace Lunch. I realised that the only person who did not turn up at these

lunches was WG Grace and I thought wouldn't it be fun to produce him.

"I knew Simon of old and although he told me he didn't do portraiture work, I challenged him to create Grace from a solid block of wood. We didn't have any photographs of what he looked from behind, but we reckoned he was a short, back and sides man with this huge beard.

"It is amazing what Simon has created. He has produced something that is now part of Gloucestershire County Cricket Club's heritage," explains Peter, and the Club is now investigating costs to produce Simon's sculpture as a limited bronze edition.

Ten years ago Peter helped the Club set up the Grace Society whereby cricket enthusiasts have the opportunity to leave part of their will to the next generation of cricketers, supporting the Club to help youngsters fulfil their potential in the sport.

Before taking on the post as headmaster of Sherborne School in Dorset, Peter was headmaster of independent day and boarding school Shiplake College, near

Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. It was in this role he commissioned Simon some 30 years ago to carve a trophy to present to the winning house. It was a stunning sculpture of a young cross country runner jumping a stile - a trophy still presented today.

However it is not the usual day-to-day work Simon uses his impressive collection of carving tools for. Instead they are regularly used to hand carve replica picture frames in all historical styles for old masters.

"We try and achieve very authentic copies so they should be indistinguishable from the original."

I have the privilege of meeting Simon and his wife Julia in their workshop. It is like a creative oasis hidden in the stunning Slad valley. Surrounded by wonderful natural beauty it is no wonder they have chosen to live here rather than work in the city. Having just helped three of my daughters complete their class homework projects on the Egyptians, I am reminded of Howard Carter's great discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. The craft of gilding is believed to originate from that time and country. Gilding - its methods, tools and materials - have hardly changed in 5,000 years. What strikes me about this workshop is the peaceful silence. Old frames from early Renaissance and from the glorious 18th century sit comfortably in this setting, where ancient carving tools reign rather than modern-day machinery as they quietly and methodically play their traditional tune in the able hands of this unassuming pair who have worked together for four decades. In her late teens, Julia worked as an apprentice gilder with Italian Vilmo Gibello, in Homer Street off the Edgware Road and was taught the ancient art of gilding by a young man Damascus D'Sousa, who was deaf and dumb.

There are very few such gilders working in this traditional way. Julia explains the long process involved in preparing surfaces before the gold leaf can be added. Up to eight layers of gesso are applied followed by coats of finely ground earth clay before



ABOVE: Gilder Julia Cooper applying gold



ABOVE: WG Grace, carved by Simon Cooper



ABOVE: Simon Cooper at work

23 carat gold leaf is laid inch by inch. WG Grace has a touch of gold added to his plinth.

"Each leaf is virtually lighter than air. It can't be touched with fingers, I have to use a gilder's knife and lift it a gilder's tip made from squirrel tail hairs," says Julia, who shows me how she finally uses an Agate stone burnisher to rub the surface to make the gold shine. It is an impressive yet long process, but one she knows inside out.

While Julia works the gold, Simon makes the frames. Their clientele list is impressive. Many art dealers, collectors and auction-houses in the UK and museums world-wide as well as private individuals have frames that the Coopers have either made from scratch, or lovingly brought back to life with their collective skills.

One such frame was for Lord Bath. In 1995, a Titian masterpiece, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, worth more than £7 million was stolen from Longleat estate. Seven years later the lost painting was discovered in a plastic bag in the Greater London area without its frame. It was Simon who made the new one to house the lost Titian which hangs at Longleat.

He shows me one frame he is currently carving. It is far from the norm. But then

his client is famous for his creative extravagance - Barry Humphries (Dame Edna Everage).

"He has got an 1880 Avant-Garde painting of a naked nun and wants a frame to look like a crown of thorns with spots of gold and spots of blood on it. We have been working with him for 30 years and he must have about 40 frames of ours in his house," confesses Simon.

It is this careful, unhurried skilful discipline which is so impressive. Both hard workers, both masters of their own craft, Simon and Julia work harmoniously together to ensure each customer - whether layman or lord - gets the best they can give.

It is easy to see why Peter asked this craftsman to bring WG Grace - a name most of us have known about since childhood - to life. Both my dad, uncle and cousin were all cricketers and last year I got to hold WG Grace's cricket bat in Stow at Cotswold Cricket Museum.

"I am not a cricketer but he is a figure, a British hero, we have grown up with. He is instantly recognisable with his big beard and strong blacksmith type figure. I am quite grateful he had a beard as it meant I didn't have to worry so much about his facial features!" explains Simon.

"Lime wood carves beautifully, it is like cutting through frozen butter, it is quite elastic and it can take quite a lot of abuse and as it is relatively soft, you can work quite quickly."

Amazingly, with the help of a few sketches, Simon worked the wood until the figure appeared. He has that rare gift of seeing something in the wood and just as WG Grace's great stance emerged on the cricket pitch, Simon was able to enable this mini replica to emerge out of the wood.

Having seen Simon in his natural working environment, I can see the hours and hours of care that went into creating this mini masterpiece. It may be 100 years since the real WG Grace was here, but his memory and heritage lives on in this mini Grace.

Peter Lapping is understandably glad he challenged his friend to use his carving tools for something a little different.

"We don't realise that in Stroud's five valleys there is such magic and talent. They are full of people like Simon and Julia who are very special, so modest and unassuming and so talented." Having met some of the people he refers to, I have to agree. ■

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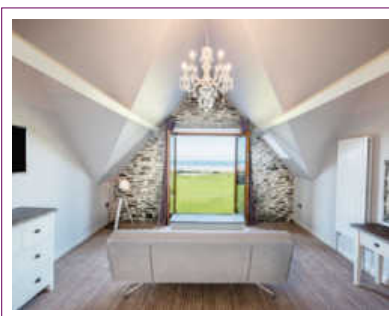
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The Hidcote Bower

Royal College of Art MA graduate Ali Grant unveiled the fruits of her labour as artist in residence at Hidcote Manor in Gloucestershire to invited guests at a champagne reception.

Ali, who is known for her sculptures, studied the famous garden and the work the National Trust does to maintain it. The result is 'The Hidcote Bower', a sculpture in bronze. Hidcote Manor Garden was inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement and was started in 1907 by Major Lawrence Johnston who devoted 30 years to creating the garden, including travelling the world to bring back unusual plant and flora specimens.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: ANTONY THOMPSON/
THOUSAND WORD MEDIA



Artist Ali Grant with her Hidcote Bower



Kate, Adrian and Rosemary Grimes



Sue Venables and April Kent



Michael Hoyle, Nick Ruskin and Chris Bowen



Ian Dutnall and Helen Buczynsky



Jeremy Houghton and Dorcas Guillebaud



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When planning the Howdens units, Karen remembered the magic triangle of cooker, sink and fridge. The candy cooker hood cost £204 and the leisure range cooker cost £670 both from appliances online (www.Ao.Com) and it has a gas hob, a ceramic hob and electric ovens



COTSWOLD INTERIORS
with VICTORIA JENKINS

A whiter *shade of pale*

From rhapsody in pink and green, to soft, chalky whites, Karen and Simon Lawton's Tewkesbury home has been transformed into a much calmer space to live in

WORDS BY: VICTORIA JENKINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: WILLIAM GODDARD



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The chaise longue from Ikea is one of their few new buys, and the dining table is made of recycled pine from Cargo. As it had already been in two previous kitchens and was a bit waxy and grimy Simon sanded it then applied natural beeswax from John Lewis



The conservatory was already here when the couple bought the house. The natural wicker chair was from Ikea while the seagrass chests were a set of three from Homebase and cost £30 five years ago. 'They are great for storing gardening stuff,' says Karen. 'The green chair was a real find. It is Lloyd Loom so worth about £80. We rescued it at the local tip just before it got dumped.'

Karen and Simon Lawton bought their three-bedroom detached house in Tewkesbury 16 years ago from an old lady who was so keen on pink and green that there were shiny green kitchen cabinets, pink carpeting everywhere and a pink acrylic bathroom suite.

'The house was a typical estate house with a separate small sitting and dining room and an arch leading to a tiny kitchen,' says Karen, who runs a marketing company, Felicitas. 'There was also a bathroom and downstairs cloakroom, the loos of which rocked alarmingly when you sat on them as neither of them were attached to a wall, plus the garage was so small we couldn't get the car in.'

At the time none of this mattered as, after a few tweaks, the couple let it out to tenants. But in 2004 they moved into it themselves with the idea of selling it on and moving into something bigger.

'But after much thought we decided not to,' says Karen. 'We are in our 50s and didn't want to take on a large mortgage -

something we had never had - as we preferred a good quality of life. We thought about the cost of travelling to work, how we could still manage with one car and how our house is in one of the best locations in town. Put all that together and it made much more sense to stay and adapt.'

So they decided to create more living space. 'This was something we were short of as the garage was full of boxes and our children's stuff so we couldn't get into it, while the loft was full of our books,' says Karen.

After studying a great many interiors magazines and planning some quite dramatic changes the couple took out a £32,000 mortgage, their first ever.

'We had created a very careful budget,' says Karen. 'We calculated the work would take three months in all so I created a spreadsheet showing which tradesmen would come when and to do what.' And now all has been transformed.

Starting in July 2012 the work has involved removing most of the interior walls downstairs - including that between



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The Candy cooker hood cost £204 and the Leisure range cooker cost £670 both from Appliances Online (www.ao.com) and it has a gas hob, a ceramic hob and electric ovens. The blue patterned curtains were a half-price bargain find at John Lewis costing £105 for both sets at each end of the new main room. 'They are cotton and fully lined, plus they were ready made. I had wanted white, but can never resist something well made at such a good price and they grew on me!' she says



the garage and the dining room - and replastering those left, so the ground floor is now one large calm living-dining-kitchen area with a library to the side.

First they gutted the tiny kitchen - which Karen had long hated - and laid engineered oak flooring of extra wide planks from Howdens throughout. Then they installed a Howdens kitchen consisting of Shaker-style units, solid oak worktops and a Leisure range cooker. "It meant that for 10 days we ate at the local curry house," says Simon, who is curator at the John Moore Museum in Church Street.

"We wanted a convivial kitchen for parties so no-one in the kitchen ever felt cut off," says Karen. "It's great as we now have a dishwasher for the first time ever - we didn't have room before."

Then they turned their attention to the exposed garage.

"We started by buying a garden shed so we could store the most important of the garage contents in it," says Karen. "We got rid of the rest. Then we put in new insulation and a new ceiling to the garage and added French windows from it leading into the garden. Now it's lined with



The basin, loo and Mira electric power shower came from Travis Perkins, as did the Iflo 'Ravana' cubicle and tray. They re-used the light but bought a new mirror from Homebase. The towel shelving is from Ikea which Karen polishes with the same oil used on her oak kitchen worktops and the laundry basket came from The White Company

bookcases - holding all those books in the loft! Plus we have a lovely open space between the library and the kitchen, the perfect place for the Christmas tree."

"So out of an unused garage we've created a library and our new big walk-in larder," says Simon.

The next step was to gut the cramped bathroom, only two metres square, and create a spacious shower room instead. Because the room is so small the underfloor pipes leading to the sink and heated towel rail heat the floor tiles too - "So instant underfloor heating!" says Karen.

"For a fortnight we had nowhere to wash," says Simon. "Luckily we managed to get permission to use the bathroom of an empty rental where I work; also the local Bell hotel let us use one of their bathrooms."

The couple went to several bathroom exhibitions to try out shower and loo seat sizes then finally bought Travis Perkins suites and floor tiles from Wicks. "A total bargain at only 4p a tile," recalls Karen. "But we do like them, adhering to the Arts & Crafts mantra: 'Have nothing that is not

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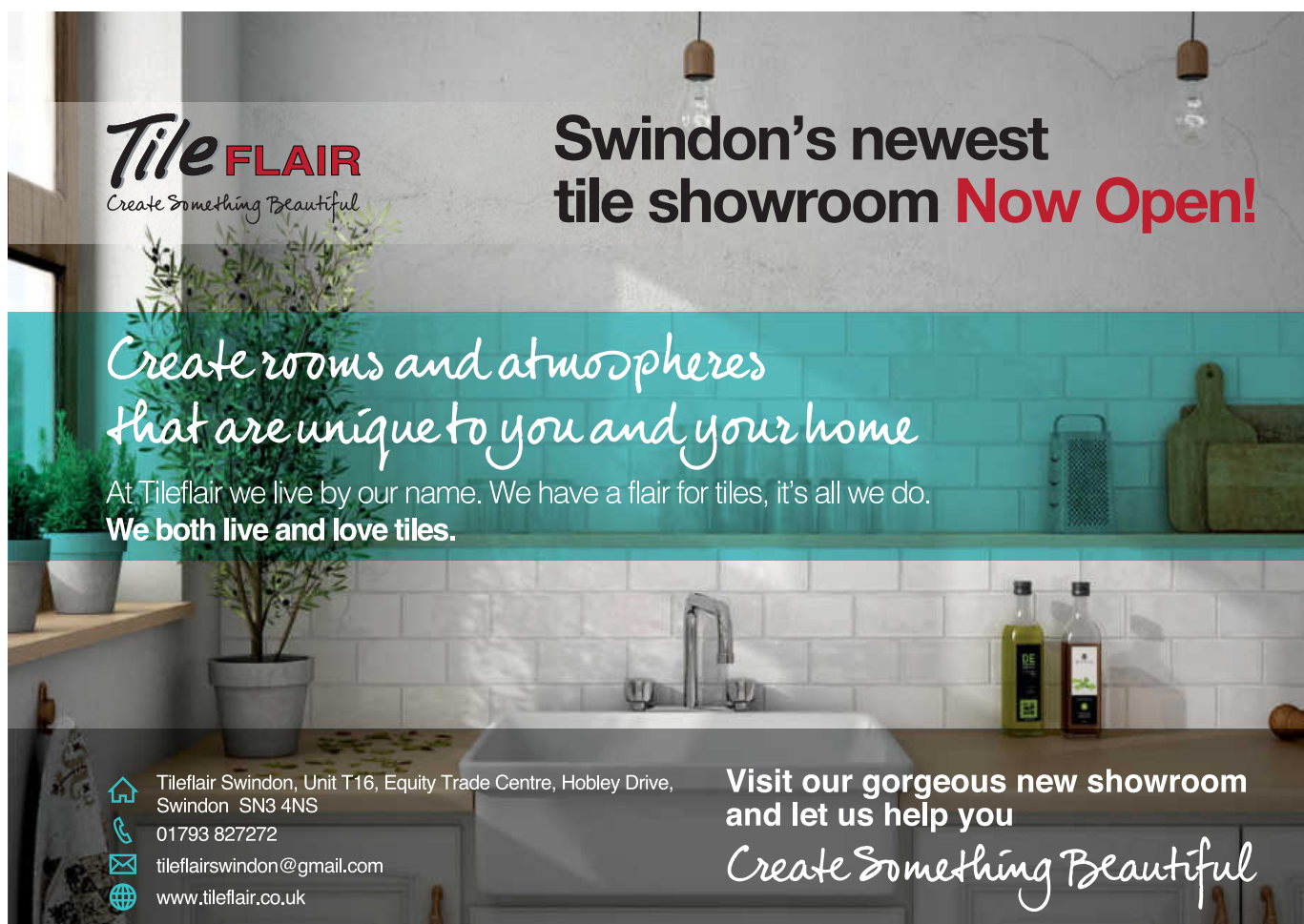
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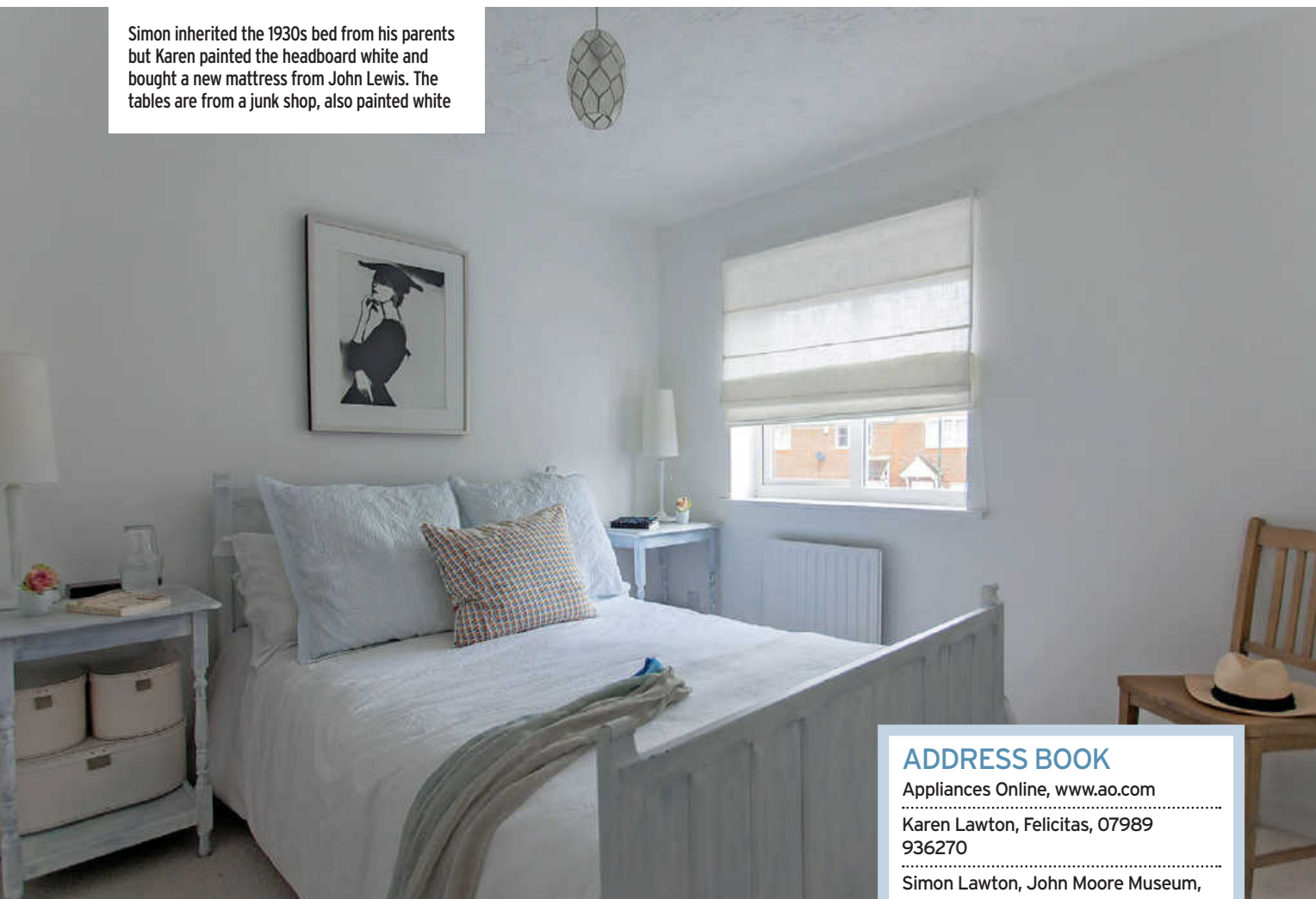
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Simon inherited the 1930s bed from his parents but Karen painted the headboard white and bought a new mattress from John Lewis. The tables are from a junk shop, also painted white



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The 1950s wooden chair is from a school via a restaurant which was refurbishing and the oak Arts & Crafts table was found in a shop in Totnes, in Devon. It was a display table and not for sale but Karen wanted it so much that she eventually managed to buy it for £25. 'It was in a poor state, but I loved the shape so I stripped it and polished it with beeswax,' she says

both beautiful and useful'. We tried to keep costs down all the time so we re-used the bathroom light - although we did buy a new mirror. After all, we didn't want to spend more on the house than we would get back if we ever sold it. Being on an estate caps its value."

They also added an extra glazed door to separate the hall from the new living area and decorated throughout in soft chalky whites and off-whites.

"At one point so much was going on that the only habitable part of the house was our double bed," says Simon.

"We did something to every room, even if only repainting it," says Karen. "So every room was emptied and the contents moved to the next one. We told ourselves we could endure three months of suffering but in fact it was a complete nightmare."

As for the furniture - "We didn't buy much new but planned how our much-loved pieces would fit," says Karen. "We spent money on items such as the solid oak worktops because we needed to, but if you see something in a magazine which you can't afford, have a think about repainting something similar. Our 1930s

bed is from Simon's parents - we just painted the headboard white and put on a new mattress. Our bedside tables were junk shop finds, again repainted."

Karen finishes, "We wanted a light, airy home that was convivial and it certainly is now a great place to cook and chat and entertain. In fact it has changed the way we live a great deal as we cook together more, watch much less TV and eat at the table more often than we did as it is such a lovely place to be." ■



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Pamela Miri of North Woodchester's Sofas & Stuff shares with us her 'five most important things to ask yourself when choosing a sofa'

1 Is it Comfortable? This may seem obvious, but you are more likely to be sitting on or in your sofa than looking at it, so although it is tempting to put beauty and elegance before comfort, it is far better to consider this first and try your chosen style out for comfort well before buying. Sit in it, as far back as possible. Do your feet touch the floor or are you dangling in mid-air? Do you feel firmly supported or are you sinking in? Is it easy to get out of? This is very important if you have elderly members of the family. How many people do you need to seat comfortably together? Very few sofas allow more than two adults to sit comfortably together: if you know there are likely to be hordes of visitors, regularly, consider a three-seater or even the 'Grande' - the largest available - version of your chosen sofa. Most sofas (all our sofas) come in a range of sizes. The size of your living space is not the only consideration.

2 Do I love it? Any sofa is a large purchase that takes thought and is likely to last, if not a lifetime, then a good 10 to 15 years. You do not want to be looking at a 'mistake' all that time. So choose something you really love: a classic shape in a beautiful, hardwearing plain or subtly patterned fabric will not date as fast as a more daring modern shape in something risqué. (Although it has to be said that some of the most famous fabric houses produce extraordinarily exotic and fabulously vibrant patterns, which are in



themselves classics: Liberty and Morris&Co are two good examples of this.) So do spend time and take the advice of your interiors adviser when choosing the ideal fabric for your chosen shape: they are experts and know exactly which fabrics will perform best for your particular requirements.

3 What about the ankle-biters? If you have young children and animals, they will be jumping about, doing gymnastics, chewing and generally making havoc on your furniture when you are not looking. It makes absolute sense to choose a washable loose cover, rather than perfectly fitted upholstery that won't come off. If however you are an empty-nester or otherwise free as a bird, then a pair of elegant, fitted, smooth two-seater sofas on beautiful turned legs with brass castors might be just right.

4 Teens? If you have a houseful of teenagers and like to keep them well out of sight in a rumpus room, TV room or playroom, then a large squashy, forgiving corner sofa with removable, washable covers and lots of scatter cushions could be the answer and will also make an ideal overnighting pad for unexpected, possibly unsavoury guests, or those who have simply fallen asleep on it.

5 Spare room? If you are short of space and extra guest rooms, but do like to have respectable friends and pristine relations to stay on after supper or for the weekend, then a smart sofabed solves several problems: crisp and totally sofa-like in the daytime, superior sofabeds are the Clark Kent of the sofa world and transform at night to a surprisingly comfortable home-from-home with a proper, decent mattress. Just whip a sheet, a duvet and some pillows out of a nearby cupboard and bob's your spare bedroom. Sleepless-making camp beds are a thing of the past, thank goodness.

Most importantly, remember that a sofa more than any other piece of furniture really does become a member of the family: memories will be made on it, rows made up on it, and both great and really awful TV watched on it together. The post-work snooze, the first glass of wine of the day, the intimate exchange of confidences... these have been happening on sofas for centuries. So it is really worth getting it absolutely right. ■



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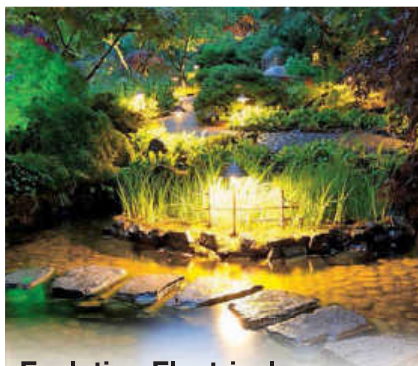
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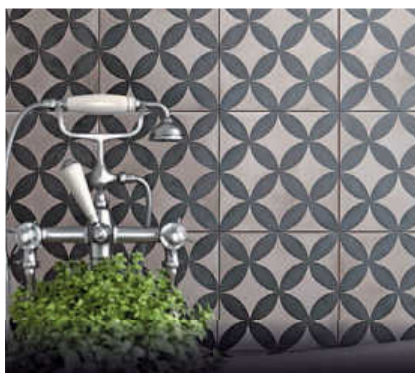
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The restored path is softened by a long mixed border that has colour year-round



Waking *Sleeping Beauty*

History is being uncovered at one Cotswold walled garden.

WORDS AND PICTURES BY: MANDY BRADSHAW

Luck has played such a key role in the restoration of the walled garden at Croome Court it's tempting to believe its salvation was meant to be. Largely neglected for around 100 years, it appears to have slumbered Sleeping Beauty-like until the right factors combined to bring it back to life.

Strangely these were not the usual vision and knowledge that drive through garden restorations but rather bureaucracy and ignorance. That it is on the way to recapturing its past glory is thanks to the work of Chris and Karen Cronin but they freely admit that had they known what they were taking on it might never have happened.

"It's been a great learning curve as we're not gardeners," says Chris. "It's completely bonkers."

Indeed, the enormous, overgrown site near Pershore would have scared off most people but the couple, who were looking for a project after their daughter left home, fell in love with it.

"It was too big to comprehend. All we knew was it was beautiful and we had to have it."

At first they merely intended to extend the two-up-two-down former gardener's cottage and turn the site into a private garden. Then bureaucracy in the form of

planning regulations stepped in: they were told development of the house would not be allowed until the perimeter wall was repaired using original bricks and lime mortar. It was to prove a turning point in the garden's story.

"Getting the walls was key to the future of this garden," says Chris, explaining that without the regulations they may well have resorted to fencing the area, losing the walled garden element.

In addition, the five years it took to find bricks under brambles, dry them and rebuild the walls one metre a year to allow the mortar to dry slowed the whole project down.

"We didn't understand what the garden was about," admits Karen. "We would have put all our

money into the house and wouldn't have looked at the history of the place. Having to do the walls gave us enough breathing space to appreciate what we've got."

And what they have is special: a five-acre plot believed to be the largest surviving Georgian walled garden in Europe. Originally part of the neighbouring Croome Court, the former home of the Coventry family and now owned by the National Trust, the earliest plan of the garden dates from about 1750 and it was redesigned by Capability Brown in 1752. Then it would have provided fruit and veg for the house

6 It was too big to comprehend. All we knew was it was beautiful and we had to have it

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By the time Chris and Karen arrived 15 years ago, there was little of its former productive life in evidence.

“Nature had taken over,” recalls Chris. “You could not see any of the walls as they were completely overgrown with ivy and the glasshouses were so overgrown you could not tell they were there.”

Having made the cottage habitable, they turned to the garden and began clearing the self-seeded trees, brambles and thistles, working slowly out from one corner and using a JCB to shift the worst. As they worked, so they uncovered the garden’s secrets: old paths; underground furnaces used to heat a free-standing ‘hot wall’ for fruit-growing; the foundations of some of the many glasshouses, tunnels used to take hot water from the boiler room across the garden to the glasshouses.

Rebuilding those glasshouses is one of the major achievements of the project. The first to be tackled was the melon and cucumber house, which today is home to tender plants, including a banana that has fruited.



Dahlias add late season colour

With hindsight, they admit their aim of ensuring the restoration was as faithful to the original as possible might not have been the best approach, as they replicated the mistakes of the past, including having no way of holding the windows open; it was then that they realised the purpose of the metal strips and hooks that had been uncovered.

“There was no pragmatism,” says Chris, “no modern design.”

The restored fig house is now used to

raise chillies and peppers while what was a vinery has been partly incorporated into the house and partly transformed into a visitor centre. Meanwhile, the foundations of the tomato house and pineapple pit are filled with veg and the base of the orchard house, once used for peaches, nectarines and apples, provides a raised bed for salad leaves. Eventually the couple hope to reinstate all the glasshouses.

Many of the crops are heritage varieties including fruit trees that once again grace the old walls: ‘Black Worcester’ pear dates back to the 1600s, ‘Peregrine’ peach from the turn of the last century and ‘Moorpark’ apricot from the mid-1700s.

Yet Karen, who has help in the garden three days a week, does not restrict herself to reproducing the past, pointing out that in its heyday the garden would have embraced progress.

“This garden would have seen the latest techniques and the latest fruit and veg. It’s important to realise a garden is a living thing.”

In the same spirit, the site now has flowers as today it is as much a family garden as a restoration project; in the past ►

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The rose garden is centred around an antique sundial



Chillies now flourish in the restored fig house

the cutting garden would have been in another part of the estate.

There is a rose garden, inspired by one the couple saw on a visit to New Zealand, and centred on a Robert Adams sundial that was discovered in three pieces in the garden. A Country Life photograph from 1915 shows the sundial nearer the pond but it sits comfortably in the middle of the geometric beds filled with David Austin roses in shades of pink and white, including 'Winchester Cathedral', 'Gertrude Jekyll' and 'William Shakespeare'.

The rose garden is sheltered by a grassed bank leading up to a raised area at one end of the plot. Again a JCB was brought in to level what had been a slope, which over the years had slipped, completely obscuring a path below. Today this is a more informal area with fruit trees and beehives.

Near the house, Karen grows herbs in a raised bed by the door and has established a long, mixed border bounded on one side by a wall and on the other by a beautiful restored path. The border provides a long season of interest with geraniums, foxgloves, echinops, roses, lavender, sedum and salvias. *Verbena bonariensis* provides height, there's a splash of gold

from *Choisya ternata* 'Sundance' and autumn colour from asters.

The time, effort and indeed money the couple have put into the project is enormous from attending courses to learn about lime mortar, to researching the garden's history. It is, they point out, a world away from their day jobs in the music industry, designing and manufacturing stage sets for stars such as Kylie and Robbie Williams.

Starting as "enthusiastic amateurs" they are now so knowledgeable that they are often asked to consult on restoration projects.

"It has become a passion of ours," says Karen.

And the project is not over yet with future plans to extend the fruit and veg beds to cover more of the site and the possibility of incorporating the final two acres of the original garden, which are owned by the Trust.

"Every step along the way has been a voyage of discovery," says Chris. "It's been exciting and it's been challenging but there's never a dull moment." ■

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These sophisticated power packs reward you with glorious flowers in spring

The bulb of any plant is a mind-bogglingly sophisticated piece of machinery. I have never taken these power packs for granted: by planting a bulb in the ground in the autumn you are rewarded, as if by a miracle, with glorious flowers in the spring, having endured the cruel winter months outside. The time of the year for planting these small brown lumps now approaches.

I read recently that people are taking anti-depressants in unprecedented numbers today, but please don't grab them if I mention Christmas. It is quite terrifying when you think of how much we all spend during this celebration of Jesus' birth, a religious holiday that has turned into a commercial circus. A way of reducing in size that hole that is burned into your pocket during December is to buy a handful or two of hyacinth bulbs and pot them up as soon as possible, one at a time, in a nice old terracotta pot. Keep them cool, well watered, and in the dark, and with any luck, if you plant them good and early, and introduce them to the light and warmth in November, they will be in flower by Christmas. They cost practically nothing and are always welcome.

It is common practice to plant tulips (at least six inches deep) later on, in November or even early December, so that bulbs are not infected by 'Tulip Fire', a fungal disease that can gain access into your garden on the wind or on raindrops. Symptoms of this unwelcome disease are brown spots on the flowers, burns on distorted leaves, and stunted flowers. Try not to cry. Instead, dig them up and burn them, and get used to the fact that you will not be able to grow tulips in infected ground for three years because the fungal spores can survive in the soil for that amount of time. Tulips also come in very handy in the border in gaps left behind by annuals. By the time they are over it is time to plant fresh annuals in their stead.



About the only conditions snowdrops don't like is being sited in an open site in the bite of the wind when they normally produce stunted flowers. They love grassy banks and protected little corners where fuller flowers are borne on longer stems with lush foliage. Snowdrops make excellent companions with winter aconites whose flowers add welcome splashes of yellow in a sea of white. If you have a small garden, mix as many different bulbs as you can in as large a pudding as you dare around the base of a deciduous tree (bulbs and most plants don't like growing underneath an evergreen because there is so little moisture in the soil). Add crocuses, daffodils and scillas to the mix and anything else that grabs your fancy. A martigan lily or two provides the last colourful explosion in this firework display. This sort of bulb planting looks very effective especially if the deciduous tree in question is surrounded by lawn. You have to leave it unmown for at least six weeks after the last of the spring flowers have faded. After mowing, with the blades set as high as possible, you are left with a messy brown patch but it soon greens up especially if you water it if the weather proves very dry.

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness

I am sad to see the garden just starting to look a bit tired and putting itself to bed for the winter albeit very slowly. As I speak many fruits hang heavy on the bough. Apples have been adorning our landscape since well before the Romans invaded us in 43 AD, but it was they who introduced more sophisticated and better tasting varieties having already mastered the art of grafting and budding. To cover the subject of apples would require me to write a book on the subject.

The more discerning fruit growers really do need to visit a specialist fruit nursery to make the right choice of tree. The three nurseries recommended to me by the Royal Horticultural Society (now that Scott's in Somerset have ceased to trade) are Reads Nurseries, Norfolk (01986 895 555); Blackmore Nurseries, Hampshire (01420 477 978) and Frank Matthews (01584 810 214). ■

P.S. Once your compost bin is filled cover it with flattened cardboard boxes, weighted down if necessary. This is a useful way of recycling something that will rot down with the compost and alleviate the waste burden at recycling centres.



A *helping* hand

When her young son showed signs of grieving his lost twin brother, Clare Mackintosh sought help from Oxfordshire-based charity SeeSaw

WORDS BY: CLARE MACKINTOSH

My son was eight when he began to grieve for the twin he'd lost at just a few weeks old. There had been tears before that point, of course, but only when others were sad; he was simply mirroring the grief he saw around him. At eight years old, things started to change. Josh struggled to sleep, reading long into the night until he eventually fell asleep, exhausted. His concentration levels dipped and schoolwork began to suffer. Mornings

were unbearable, as he sobbed that he didn't want to go to school. "It's hard to be happy on the outside," he told me, "when I'm so sad on the inside."

At a loss as to how to help him, I turned to SeeSaw, an Oxfordshire-based charity offering grief support for children and young people. The charity was founded 15 years ago, when Sobel House hospice recognised the need to help young people come to terms with the loss of a close relative. SeeSaw was the first bereavement organisation in the country to have a

dedicated schools worker, and this is still a big part of the charity's work. Following the recent suicide of a 15-year-old student, SeeSaw director Dr Helen Mackinnon was at the school the following morning, helping the teaching staff and parents support pupils affected by the tragedy. SeeSaw also works with the police, social services and the John Radcliffe hospital to advise on bereavement needs, providing a first response to critical situations around the county.

Helen explained to me that my son's

situation was not unusual. "Reactions to a bereavement can occur weeks, months or even years after the event, as young people begin to question what has happened," she said. "This particularly occurs when children have been bereaved at an age when they had only limited information or understanding." She stressed that grief was a normal reaction to bereavement, and that most children can be perfectly well supported by friends and family. "Emotional reactions to a death might include numbness, denial, sadness, guilt or separation anxiety," she explained. "Children may also experience physical reactions such as tiredness, illness, loss of appetite, lack of energy and sleep disturbances. Their behaviour could change: aggression and anger is common, as is regression in areas like toilet training. All these are perfectly normal responses to loss."

SeeSaw volunteers are trained to help a young person in whatever way they need: referrals often come in following the unexpected death of a sibling or parent, from relatives anxious to know how best to break the news, or cope with the funeral. SeeSaw's own publication, *What happens when someone dies?* is designed to be read by adult and child together, decoding the jargon of death - pallbearers, mourners, eulogy - and providing tough but essential information such as what happens at a cremation, or what someone looks like after they die.

Helen showed me a deck of 'mood cards', which can be helpful for children struggling to articulate their emotions. "We use a range of resources," she explained, "which means we can tailor our response to each child." I was staggered to learn from the Child Bereavement Network that one in 29 children aged five to 16 has lost a parent or sibling, and that one in 16 children aged five to 16 has been bereaved of a friend.

Alan Turner lives with his two children, now aged six and four. Two years ago his wife was taken to hospital with pneumonia and became critically ill. When the doctors broke the news to Alan that his wife would not survive for much longer, the palliative care nurse suggested contacting SeeSaw. "They arrived half an hour after that first call," Alan remembers. "They guided me through how to tell the girls that their mum was going to die, and helped us all through that terrible time. Since then support has included speaking to staff at school and playgroup, to help them understand my daughters' behaviour. I'm extremely grateful for all the help that SeeSaw have given our family. They have

made a devastating situation more bearable but most importantly helped to ensure my children have been included in everything - from before the death through to the planning of the funeral and beyond." Helen is keen to stress that there is no limit on the support SeeSaw gives: they will continue working with a family until such time as they are no longer needed.

I was surprised to learn that such a crucial service receives very little funding, and that 85% of SeeSaw's income comes from their own fundraising. "We have some loyal and passionate supporters," Helen tells me, "who will run marathons, sell cakes, undertake sponsored cycle rides, or simply donate via our JustGiving site." For their 15th Anniversary year SeeSaw has launched one of their biggest fundraisers yet: they are asking 1,500 people to donate £15; a pound for each year SeeSaw has been helping children and young people in Oxfordshire. "If we're successful," Helen says, "we'll raise £22,500, which will go a long way towards the £300,000 we need every year." I can't run a marathon, but I can donate £15, and I'll be persuading as many people as I can to do the same.

Following my own call to SeeSaw, we were allocated a trained volunteer to work with Josh. I worried he might find it hard to talk to her - that it might make things worse, even - but he got on with her famously. On that first visit I drifted around the kitchen, anxiously listening to the strains of conversation coming from the sitting room. SeeSaw volunteers visit after school, meaning routines aren't too disrupted, and the bereaved child isn't made to feel any more 'different' than they already feel among their peers.

When our support worker had gone, I asked Josh how he felt. "I liked her," he said. "It was nice telling someone new about Alex." He showed me a book that his support worker had lent him, about pretending to be happy when inside we're upset. "That's how I feel," he said, and I hugged him tight and told him it was just the same for me.

Grief is a long process, but it doesn't have to be a lonely one. ■

SeeSaw provides support for Oxfordshire children and their families coping with the death of a parent or sibling. Their book 'What happens when someone dies?' can be ordered from their website, and teachers can download a free Schools Pack. Contact SeeSaw on 01865 744 768 or visit www.seesaworg.uk.

For families outside Oxfordshire, The Childhood Bereavement Network maintains a directory of organisations across the UK.

Helping a child through bereavement

- Talk to your child. Use language they know, and check their understanding.
- Showing your own grief is important, and helps children realise what's normal, but let them know it's okay to laugh and have fun too.
- Practical activities such as putting together photo books or memory boxes can be done as a family, and provide a helpful resource to turn to.
- Above all be there for them: grieving children need your support and presence more than your advice.



Dr Helen Mackinnon,
Director of SeeSaw.



Clare's son, Josh, at his twin brother's grave

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Going the extra mile

We couldn't cope without our wonderful volunteers

The voluntary sector is an incredible machine. Apart from three hard-working staff members at WI House in Gloucester all our events and activities are organized and run by volunteers. It not only amazes me but makes me very proud that they are able to put on such a varied and successful range of activities. Back in June we had 550 members at a county picnic at Highnam Court where several committee members went the extra mile to make the day such a success. This didn't just happen on its own but took months of planning to arrange and execute.

Another event of which I am extremely proud of is the GFWI Centenary Exhibition currently ongoing at the Gloucester Folk Museum in Westgate Street, Gloucester until November 1. This, in the main, has been organized by our County Archivist, Marion Postlethwaite, and Gill Thomas, former county chairman and display champion. The exhibition was formally opened by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Ruth Fitzjohn. The new Mayor and Mayoress of Gloucester, Sebastian and Vicki Field also attended along with the GFWI trustees, staff and former chairmen and other guests.

The exhibition shows crafts from the last half century and records going back some 90 years. For example the membership of the WI in 1940 was a staggering 291,000 members and the membership fee was two shillings! We have also borrowed back the

6 The membership of the WI in 1940 was a staggering 291,000 and the membership fee was two shillings

famous Tailor of Gloucester waistcoat from the Tailor of Gloucester museum, lovingly recreated by WI members from the wedding dress of WI member Lady Carolyn Elwes back in the 1980s.

We are grateful to the Folk Museum curators, Gloucestershire Archives staff and the Tailor of Gloucester Museum for their assistance to enable us to put on this exhibition. Do visit if you have the opportunity, you won't be disappointed and it's a fascinating insight into the history of the WI.

Another insight to the WI was in the recent *Home Fires* television series on ITV. The series was adapted from the book *Jambusters* by Julie Summers. *Jambusters* tells the history of the WI from its inception and so we were very pleased to secure Julie as our speaker for our Autumn County Meeting at the end of September. We are trying a new venue too (as there is some little event going on in Gloucester called the Rugby World Cup) and the Pittville Pump Room will be our splendid home for this event. Tickets are limited so we hope there's not a mail for places.



Until 1942, the WI subscription was two shillings

This month we have:

- A walk at Kemerton followed by a lunch provided by Kemerton WI
- A two night stay in Yorkshire to visit the NFWI Centenary Fair in Harrogate
- A New Speakers audition morning at Churchdown
- A Programming workshop for WIs
- Our Federation autumn holiday, to Elba, Italy
- The Village Show at the Royal Three Counties Showground, Malvern
- Our Autumn County Meeting at the Pittville Pump Rooms
- Our Centenary Exhibition continues at the Gloucester Folk Museum until November 1.



Gloucester's mayor Sebastian Field, mayoress Vicki Field, Anne Turner, and Ruth Fitzjohn



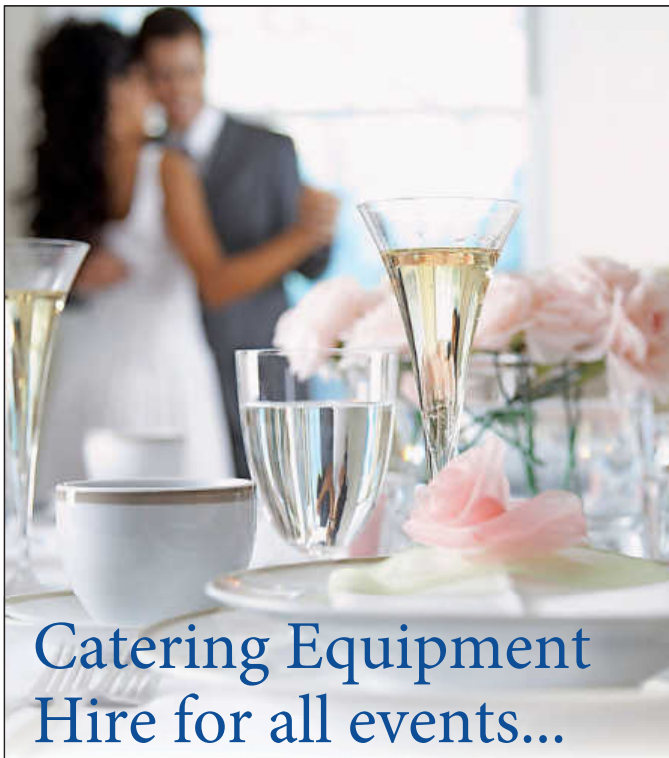
Marion Postlethwaite, Michell Davidson, and Karen Conway

For more information of the WI in Gloucestershire visit www.thewi.org.uk/gloucestershire or telephone 01452 523966



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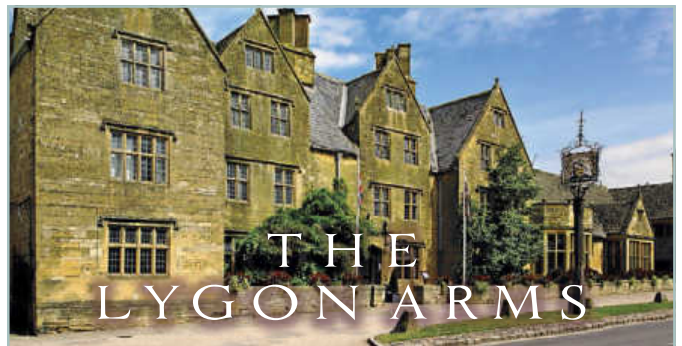
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Trad vs modern

Events and wedding planner Julia Sibun reveals the traditional approach and this year's hot wedding trends

How it used to be...

Ceremony: white wedding, preferably in a church with a full order of service delivered by the village vicar, including old-fashioned vows.

Photographs: always posed and typically taken outside the church and reception venue; lots of formal shots of the bride's family, groom's family and guests.

Receiving line: where the couple greet their guests in the reception venue, after an introduction from the toastmaster, ahead of their wedding breakfast.

The wedding breakfast: three or four-course sit down meal as your first meal as husband and wife, complete with wines to go with each course and a Champagne toast.

Father-of-the-bride's speech: a traditional tear-jerker, where dad pays tribute to his darling daughter, including lots of childhood memories. Finally, he toasts the happy couple.

Groom's speech: thanks the bride's parents for producing such a fabulous girl, compliments his beautiful new wife and pays tribute to the bridesmaids.

Best man's speech: the banana skin of wedding speeches, it's supposed to introduce the groom to the bride's family with amusing anecdotes.

Cutting the cake: always follows the speeches, where the bride and groom make the first cut with a huge silver knife, before the three-tier creation is whisked away to be cut by the catering staff.

First dance: the bride and groom take to the floor before anyone else for sometimes an impromptu, sometimes rehearsed routine. Then the groom dances with his mother and the bride with her father. Then it's time for the guests to flood the dance floor

Throwing the bouquet: marks the honeymoon send-off, where the bride tosses her bouquet into the crowd to be caught by the nearest waiting singleton.



How it is...

Social side: a wedding starts with a party. It's often extended into a long weekend, with soirees the day before and day after. Couples enjoy meeting friends and family at a venue the night before, usually close to the church or reception venue. Then it's party time again the following day for a post-wedding barbecue or lunch in the pub

Ceremony: more often than not, I still find most couples want to have the service in a formal way, such as in a lovely hotel function room or restaurant, or in a church. Other options are a small marquee or archway of flowers set up in the garden at home, and I've had a ceremony set on the river bank which was extremely romantic, with all the guests watching the ceremony on straw bales. The bride was transported to that one on a small garden tractor. I've not yet had any quirky beach ceremonies, but I know some beach huts have now been licensed.

Photographs: definitely reportage and less formal photographs are popular these days. Most couples now like to have a photo booth, mostly vintage-style ones, where everyone can dress up and be silly.

Wedding Breakfast: a sit-down meal is preferred in most cases, but now it's with the less formal family-style service. A popular way is for one nominated guest on each table to carve a joint of meat, with the vegetables or salad in bowls on the tables for guests to help themselves.

Speeches: It is still usually the bride's father, groom and the best men that do the speeches. Although it's quite popular now for the microphone to be handed around the room for guests to stand up and make impromptu speeches.

The cake: cheese cakes which are several different rounds of cheeses piled on top of one another can be an alternative to a traditional, sweet tiered cake, with elaborately-decorated cupcakes doing that job.

Entertainment: it's often the case now that a band or pianist will play during the wedding breakfast. Celidhs are very popular, and get everyone on the dance floor. Or finish the evening with a laser show to music, as opposed to the traditional firework display. ■

Contact Julia Sibun at www.juliasibun.co.uk

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CLASSIC STYLING FOR WEDDING FLOWERS

Floral trends come and go, so how do you achieve the classic look which will make your wedding photographs a delight to look back on in twenty or even fifty years?

Leading Cotswold events florist, Rose Hamson, tells you how.

CLASSIC design is all about proportion, simplicity and the choice of materials. But those rules should not stop you having fun with your design - they just ensure that the design works.

The first things most brides have in mind for the wedding are the venue and, of course, the dress. Together with a clear image in their mind of how the dress will look at the venue. Modern and sophisticated, or relaxed and romantic?

A colour scheme will not be far behind these decisions, and this is probably the best point to start talking to your florist. What flowers do you love - are they going to be in season - and does the florist share your appreciation of the principles of proportion and simplicity? Plus knockout gorgeousness!

A good approach is to choose the main flowers which will run through the design, but to vary



the way they are used. The main flowers for this tend to be high-impact varieties such as the wide range of roses and lilies which are available all year round, or in summer you could choose beautiful hydrangea, peonies or sunflowers, or in winter luscious chrysanthemum blooms or amaryllis.

The florist's skill is then to suggest how these can be used in the various elements of the design: bouquets and buttonholes, flowers for the ceremony (from large pedestal arrangements to pew ends), welcoming flowers for the reception, table decorations and cake decoration.

Making each of these special and beautiful in its own right is the creative part - and the choice and use of supporting seasonal flowers, foliage, twigs, blossom, and berries is the key to having a successful overall design.



Making history

While trying to set up a new mobile phone contract, actor and writer Sophie Ward realised the limitations of a civil partnership in this country

It was a gloriously sunny December day in the Cotswolds when actor and writer Sophie Ward finally married her long-term partner Rena Brannan.

The day had been 18 years in the making. Their love story started in Los Angeles in the mid-90s, following the breakdown of Sophie's marriage.

What followed was a very public media storm, where paparazzi camped on their doorsteps - Sophie's in a sleepy little village between Stroud and Cirencester; Rena's in LA - harassed their parents and chat-show hosts asked loaded questions about lesbians.

It was tabloid muck-raking at its worst, but they weathered it.

In the years that followed, the couple would hold two ceremonies to seal their love: one, a blessing at the Groucho Club in London, which the tabloids would cruelly describe as a 'bizarre lesbian ceremony'; the other, a long-awaited civil partnership.

So why was it so important to stage a third, a marriage, in Stroud, on that crisp winter's day in 2014?

"For a start, it's much simpler to be married," says Sophie, a former Vogue model who has two sons, Nathaniel, 26, and 22-year-old Joshua. "There's no need for some special column somewhere."

This 'special column' she refers to followed an incident in Carphone Warehouse, where she was trying to set up a new mobile phone contract.

"Married, single, divorced or widowed?" asked the sales assistant. There was no 'civil partnered' option, and Sophie, the queue building behind her, was mortified.

"The right to get married is afforded to everyone else," says Sophie, author of *A Marriage Proposal*.



Rena and Sophie at their Stroud wedding

"Civil partnerships weren't really recognised in our country, not culturally. And outside our country, no one had even heard of them."

With Rena in the background of their London home, quietly answering Sophie's questions as we talk ("Darling, can you remember what you wore?" "Darling, what did you cook?"), Sophie talks about wanting to be part of the poetry of marriage; the disenfranchisement she felt at being excluded from it; the terror that engulfed her every time she walked through airport immigration, wondering if this would be the time Rena was turned away.

"It's about civil rights," she says. "I grew up believing I was entitled to it and I wanted to engage in all of those things."

Sophie and Rena's first ceremony took place in the summer of 2000, presided over by a Unitarian minister - though it had no legal standing.

"That was our marriage," she says, emphatically. "We regarded ourselves privately as being married, and I don't doubt that every one of our guests did too."

Sophie and Rena became civil partners in 2010, renewing their vows in front of

family and friends, including Sophie's sister Kitty, who is married to comedian Michael McIntyre.

But though in 2013, the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act was passed, they still couldn't marry - unless they divorced first. It was a bizarre situation.

"I remember Nathaniel making the point that legally he had been able to get married for many years, but his mother...I couldn't. It was a very strange thing."

Nine months later, the law changed. And so Sophie proposed and the pair planned their wedding, an intimate affair at Stroud Register Office with Nathaniel as witness and best man, and 30 close friends.

"Sadly Joshua was in LA at the time, so couldn't be there," says Sophie. "I'm still very cross with him about it," she adds, tongue-in-cheek.

"No, seriously, we didn't have our families there this time.

"We didn't feel that we needed to put them through it. Weddings are exhausting. It was small but still very special, it marked a huge turning point in our lives.

"The sun shone, there were a few people who had never been to the Golden Valley before and they were duly impressed."

Rena, who, had worn an elaborate, corseted gown to their other ceremonies, opted for a simple, black v-necked LK Bennett dress. Sophie wore a high-necked, short-sleeved velvet dress, again in black, and carried a bouquet of pink roses and mistletoe.

"We're big fans of black and white," laughs Sophie. "And we'd done white. So we reverted to our default palette, black. I'd thought about winter white, you know, cream, but when I went around the



“We regarded ourselves privately as being married, and I don’t doubt that every one of our guests did too

shops...”

She trails off, recalling how one of their guests had written them a poem (“It was very moving, we all cried”) and how both she and Rena, as had become their custom, made speeches.

After the ceremony, they and their guests decamped to their village home for “a lovely party, we drank a great deal of Champagne” and Claridge’s Chicken Pot Pie, a Gordon Ramsay recipe made by Korean-American Rena, who all those years ago had won over Nathaniel and Joshua with her culinary skills and a “rucksack full of jelly beans”, as Sophie once famously wrote.

“She cooked for 100 guests at our civil partnership, too, so she wasn’t phased,” says Sophie. “It was a wonderful, wonderful day.”

Sophie and Rena honeymooned in the United States, spending the New Year in LA with Joshua. And they’ve recently moved house, Sophie leaving the Cotswolds after 27 years to return to her north London roots where her family still lives.

“The village was so supportive when Rena and I got together, they were wonderful,” she says. “But I promised Rena when the boys left home, we’d move back to London. I kept her here for 15 years, so it was fair enough.”

Sophie, currently working on a play about the life of tragic British nurse Edith Cavell, who perished at the hands of the Germans in 1915, wrote movingly in the *Guardian* just before their December wedding.

“We will be part of the history of marriage, of the poetry of romance, of the narrative of love,” she said. And so it is. They are. ■



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Honeymoon weather

Wedding date planned but no idea where to honeymoon to make the best of the weather? Check out our handy month-by-month guide to the perfect destination, whatever time of year you're tying the knot

January

Australia, Caribbean, Dubai, India, Kenya, Maldives, Mexico, New Zealand, Oman, South America, Thailand, Vietnam

February

Australia, Caribbean, Dubai, India, Kenya, Maldives, Mexico, New Zealand, Oman, South America, Thailand, Vietnam

March

Australia, Caribbean, Dubai, India, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Oman, South America, Thailand

April

Bermuda, Bora Bora, Dubai, France, India, Italy, Maldives, Morocco, Oman, Seychelles, South America, Turkey

May

Bermuda, Bora Bora, Europe, Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco, Seychelles, South Africa, Turkey

June

Bermuda, California, Europe, Maldives, Mauritius, South Africa, Turkey

July

Bora Bora, Bali, California, Europe, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania

August

Bora Bora, California, Europe, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania

September

Bali, Chile, Europe, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco, Tanzania

October

Europe, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Oman, Seychelles

November

Caribbean, India, Maldives, Mauritius, Oman, Seychelles, Thailand

December

Australia, Caribbean, Dubai, India, Maldives, New Zealand, Oman, South America, Thailand



Cotswold Life's top tips

Best year-round destination

With beautiful beaches, thrilling jungle, 14 National Parks, six World Heritage sites and fortified Colonial towns, Sri Lanka boasts sunshine year-round. www.selectiveasia.com says: "Undeveloped beach paradises, a startlingly rich cultural heritage, a wide variety of tropical wildlife and adventure experiences... as well as warmly welcoming people and irresistible cuisine - but without any teeming hordes? Now is definitely the time to go."

Two for the price of one

Why put all your eggs in one basket when you can plan a dual destination trip? Travel company Kuoni says:

"Honeymoon safaris can be easily combined with a beach holiday to ensure relaxation and more quality time together. Beautiful Zanzibar, Kenya's lovely coast-line and the jewel-like islands of the Indian Ocean are some of the most popular extensions to a honeymoon safari."

Jewel in the crown

The Seychelles archipelago is the ultimate castaway-island fantasy, according to Conde Nast Traveller. "It's out-of-this-world beautiful, the archetypal Indian Ocean

paradise:
palm-fringed
beaches



shelving gently into a dreamy-turquoise sea. And there's a romantic wild-ness to it which certain others lack; the islands of the Seychelles are less groomed; there's adventure to be had and curious wildlife - a wildlife so rich it is comparable to the Galápagos."

Best for thrill-seekers

"Put on your lei and hula on down to palm-fringed lagoons, lush rainforests, and soaring volcanoes in Hawaii," says Virgin Holidays. "Or, just sit on the beach, relax and sip on your Mai Tai. With eight islands to explore, this paradise treasure-trove will spoil you."

Luxury on a budget

Mr and Mrs Smith describes this place as a "design summer camp",

and well they might. Papaya Playa in Tulum, Mexico is all Palapa-thatched cabanas and casitas which open right on to the beach. "They're refreshingly basic - the ultra-luxury philosophy being that, after you've had everything, the most luxurious thing is for it to just be the two of you."

Beware...


Beware the hurricane season if you're heading to the Caribbean or Bermuda. Officially, the danger time runs from June through until November, but the worst months are September, October and November. But take heart. Just because you travel during these months doesn't mean you'll get hit: Miami, for example, has a much worse incidence of tropical storms.



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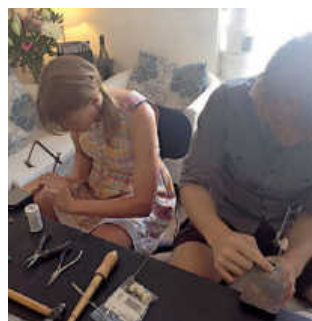
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Cotswold Real Wedding Gemma Brocklesby & James Slater

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: THE LEMON HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY LTD

Venue: The Bear of Rodborough

Honeymoon: Yet to be decided

Photography: Paul Athey

Classy and relaxed is how Gemma Slater remembers her big day and she puts it all down to a great venue with professional staff and a fantastic florist and photographer.

"Between them they took over and made sure everything was perfect so there wasn't anything for us to worry about on the day.

James proposed on New Year's Day a year after the couple met on a dating website.

"I had an inkling he was going to do it on New Year's Eve but he wasn't very well and ended up going to bed really early so I was a bit disappointed.

"But the next morning he came downstairs in a tee-shirt with the words: 'Keep Calm Will You Marry Me?' which was a real surprise," says Gemma.

"My dress was very traditional, I nearly tripped on it walking into the service but no-one seemed to notice and the ceremony was very relaxed as neither of us are very religious.

"The day was lovely, exactly how we wanted it with amazing food and brilliant speeches that didn't go on for too long." ■



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Cotswold Real Wedding Emily Wickham & Andrew Mason

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: PAUL ROSE PHOTOGRAPHY

Venue: Caswell House, Oxfordshire
Honeymoon: South Africa
Photographer: Paul Rose Photography

IT wasn't quite a case of 'love me, love my dog' when Emily and Andrew met through work but when she invited him on a walk with her Staffordshire bull terrier, Cookie, Andrew was adamant he didn't like that particular breed.

"He quickly changed his mind though and absolutely adores her now," says Emily.

So it was fitting that Cookie was also in on the proposal which took place after a dog walk in the Lake District where all three had gone to celebrate Emily's 30th birthday.

"We decided on an autumn wedding because that's my favourite season and I wanted all those beautiful vibrant colours in my wedding bouquet."

The couple were married at the Church of St Mary at Bampton, Oxfordshire, the location for the TV series Downton Abbey and Emily walked down the aisle in an ivory lace gown.

"I am not a girly, girl so I had never even thought about wedding dresses but as soon as I tried mine on I knew it was the one," she says.

"It's a bit like choosing men - you just know." ■





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Cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk

WEDDING VENUES



THE BAY TREE HOTEL

www.cotswold-inns-hotels.co.uk/property/the_bay_tree_hotel/weddings
Tel: 01993 822791

SHEEP STREET, BURFORD,
OXFORDSHIRE, OX18 4LW

In the picture-postcard town of Burford, the southern gateway to the Cotswolds, is to be found the charming Bay Tree Hotel.

The Bay Tree Hotel has two rooms licensed to hold Civil Wedding Ceremonies for up to 50 guests. Each of the 21 bedrooms is individually furnished with rich fabrics and antiques to create a relaxed, country feel. Summer House is licensed for the perfect alfresco style ceremony.



The Hawthorn Room - up to 12 people



The Conservatory - up to 60



The Hawthorn Room - up to 12 people



Wedding advisor: YES



Parking available: YES



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up to 270 (200 for a civil ceremony)



up to 300



Wedding advisor: YES



Parking available: YES



THE MANOR HOUSE HOTEL

cotswold-inns-hotels.co.uk/property/the_manor_house_hotel/weddings
Tel: 01608 650501

HIGH STREET, MORETON-IN-MARSH, GLOS, GL56 0LJ

The Manor House Hotel is an enchanting 16th century Cotswold retreat set in beautiful Moreton-in-Marsh, an elegant and attractive market town in the Cotswolds.

4 Star Manor House Hotel and 2 rosette award winning restaurant with 35 en suite bedrooms including honeymoon suite (cottage with private hot tub). Stunning thatch-roofed timber Breeze House, perfect for an alfresco style ceremony.



Sezincote can seat up to 120 guests



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up to 200 guests



Wedding advisor: YES



Parking available: YES



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70



90



Wedding advisor: YES



Parking available: YES



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Evening buffet 450



Wedding advisor: YES



Parking available: NO



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Evening Buffet 400



Wedding advisor: YES



Parking available: YES



up to 90 guests



up to 90 guests



Wedding advisor: YES



Parking available: YES



MAX 80



MAX 100



Wedding advisor: YES - April Hood



Parking available: YES - free on site



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THE SWAN HOTEL

www.cotswold-inns-hotels.co.uk/property/the_swan_hotel/weddings
Tel: 01285 740695

BIBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE,
GL7 5NW

The Swan Hotel is an enchanting 17th century former coaching inn sitting in the heart of the village on the banks of the River Coln, and is the perfect retreat for unpretentious comfort, a friendly atmosphere, wonderful food and fine wine.

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Wedding advisor: YES



Parking available: YES



Library Restaurant - up to 26 guests



Signet Room is licensed for 110 guests



Library Restaurant - up to 26 guests



Signet Room is licensed for 110 guests

Wedding advisor: YES

Parking available: YES



4-120



up to 180



Wedding advisor: YES



Parking available: YES

Ladies of the Manor

Walk boldly into autumn with jewel-bright colours and sumptuous fabrics, such as these gorgeous designs by Stow-on-the-Wold's Jenny Edwards-Moss

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TAMMIE LOUISE PHOTOGRAPHY, www.tammielouisephoto.com

ALL OUTFITS BY JENNY EDWARDS-MOSS, Stow-on-the-Wold

JEWELLERY BY ANEATA BOOTE DESIGN, Chipping Campden

MODELS DIANA BLAKENEY, ELLE TURVEY, LOUISE JACKSON, SHELLEY MARQUAND

HAIR BY HARE & HYDE, Worcester

MAKE-UP BY VICTORIA JONES, Professional Make-up Artist, www.victoriajonesmakeup.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHED ON LOCATION AT LORDS OF THE MANOR, Upper Slaughter



Black and gold brocade long fitted jacket, £465
Maroon and gold brocade short fitted jacket, £405



Lords of the Manor

At Lords of the Manor, they have a good eye for detail and an appreciation of the finer things.

All year round their eight acres of gardens have something splendid to offer, and in autumn the changing colour of the landscape is something to behold! Every day their brigade of Michelin-starred chefs produce wonderful cuisine, and they consider it a pleasure to share the unique country house with guests who manage to seek out this secluded Cotswold spot. Breaks start at £249 for B&B, or experience being Lord and Lady of the Manor exclusively from £4,500. Stow-on-the-Wold, Upper Slaughter, GL54 2JD, tel: 01451 820243, www.lordsofthemanor.com



Chocolate brown felt and sinamay hat, £250
Bronze silk brocade coat trimmed with velvet and animal print, £795



Burnt orange sinamay hat trimmed with feathers, £250

Jenny Edwards-Moss

Jenny Edwards-Moss designs and makes statement clothing for special occasions.

Her shop, in Stow-on-the-Wold, is unlike any other. She is not restricted by seasons, collections or colours. Jenny keeps a close eye on fashion and works with clients, advising on style and design, creating a unique outfit for them.

Jenny says, "I was delighted to have my designs photographed for Cotswold Life and you can see how I have put together a few outfits to show how distinctive they can be.

"My Statement Jackets are wonderfully versatile, many looking just as fabulous with a pair of jeans or teamed up with something smarter."

Jenny Edwards-Moss, 4 Brewery Yard, Sheep Street, Stow-on-the-Wold, GL54 1AA, tel: 01451 870194, www.jennyedwards-moss.co.uk



Silk and leopard velvet jacket, £580

Aneata Boote Design

Aneata Boote is a designer artisan, specialising in creating meaningful pieces for her clients, often remodelling their much loved and bequeathed jewellery.

"I believe that value isn't always monetary. If it means something to you... it's priceless," Aneata says

Working with all precious metals and gemstones, she prides herself in using eco-friendly recycled materials where possible, including using only vintage beads in any bead work. Aneata also offers repairs, including replacement stones and re-tipping prongs.

You will find Aneata working away in her studio in Chipping Campden, where you are able to browse her unique one-of-a-kind pieces, including the ever popular Cotswold Mice.

You are encouraged to browse and ask any questions on how the pieces have been created. A very warm welcome awaits you.

Aneata Boote Design, 9 & 10 Cambrook Court, High Street, Chipping Campden, GL55 6 AT, tel: 01386 841224, <http://aneatabootedesign.simpl.com>

Ivory sinamay hat with silk and feather trim, £225
Buttermilk and gold embroidered silk jacket £570
Gold dupion silk dress. £390



Burnt orange sinamay hat trimmed with feathers, £250

Burnt orange embroidered full-length cotton coat, £650

Orange handheld handbag, £32.50

Ivory sinamay hat with silk and feather trim, £225

Buttermilk and gold embroidered silk jacket, £570

Gold dupion silk dress, £390

Ivory handbag £32.95



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At Hare & Hyde's hair salon they're all passionate and knowledgeable, striving for a creative, social, open and inspiring environment in Worcester that has no hierarchy.

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Victoria Jones

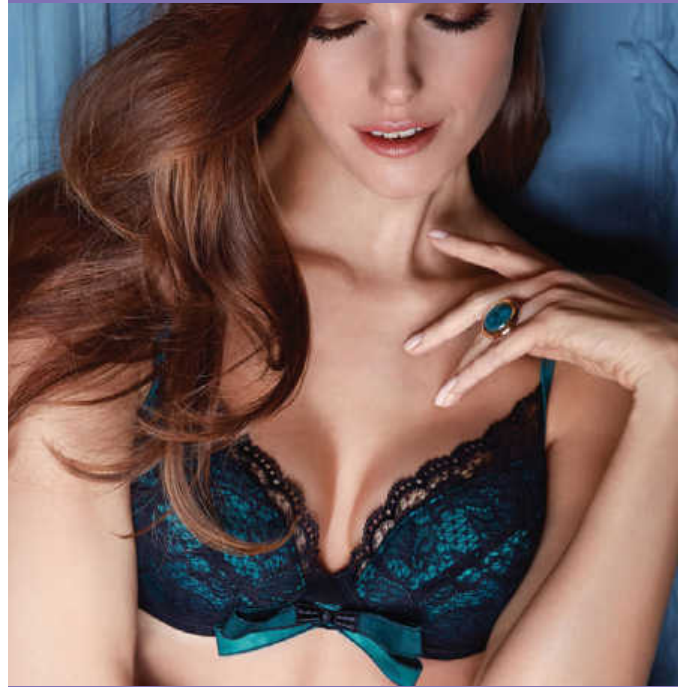
Victoria is a freelance professional make-up artist based in Worcestershire. She specialises in bridal, beauty, fashion, photographic and television make-up, having worked on some of the well-known television soaps that we have all loved over the years.

Victoria used a range of high quality make-up brands such as Chanel, Tom Ford, Dior, Kryolan, Nars, MAC along with Temptu's Professional Airbrush make-up foundation. Victoria used the airbrush make-up to gain the lightweight, water-resistant, long-lasting flawless finish for these exquisite photographs. Temptu's Airbrush make-up is becoming the go-to option for brides-to-be and clients across the region who are looking for the perfect, long-lasting look.

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From coast to country

Fashion forward

Autumn, season of mists and mellow fashion. From tweed to new boots, there's plenty to inspire you in the Cotswolds

EDITED BY: SARAH DREW JONES



AUTUMN TREAT

Heritage prints are still big news: think Prince of Wales check, herringbone and tartan in all its glory. This tartan backpack is the highlight of the new season collection from Vivienne Westwood, £395, available from House of Fraser in Cirencester, Bath and Cheltenham.

NEW IN

Artisan jeweller Aneata Boot crafts exquisite and unusual pieces in her Chipping Camden Studio. Her signature Cotswold Mice line - rings, pendants, earrings, cufflinks, bangles and tie pins, from £85 - has now been joined by a horse collection, inspired by their graceful curves. You can even have some of your own horse's hair incorporated into the design (from £80, aneatabootedesign.simpl.com)



WE LOVE

Best thing about autumn? It's the perfect excuse to wear tweed. Warm, classic and chic, good British tweed never falls out of fashion. The new Sandra gilet by Jack Murphy, £149.99, has a fitted and flattering shape and cosy fleece lining. Find local stockists or buy online at jackmurphy.eu



Charlotte Drury of Charles Clinkard

FIVE MINUTES WITH... CHARLES CLINKARD

New shoes and boots season is upon us. We asked Charlotte Drury, Ladies Footwear and Handbag Buyer at Charles Clinkard, for her take on new trends and timeless classics

We're a British heritage brand. Charles Clinkard began and is still based in the North East of England. The company opened its first store in 1924 and we now have 33 stores across the UK. Our main focus is ladies', men's and children's footwear and we stock a range of brands including Gabor, Skechers and Startrite.

My job's different every day and I love working as part of the buying team. My favourite part of my job is travelling to shows to see the new collections. We are currently buying for spring/summer 2016 and it's exciting to see the new trends, styles and colours.

For autumn, boots are a style essential. Ankle boots have been huge over the past few autumn/winter seasons and continue to dominate the collections. We have a huge variety coming in for AW15 so there should be something to suit everyone. Key trends are Chelsea boots, metal hardware such as buckles and outside zips and knitted cuffs which add colour. Autumn's not just a season to wear black and tan, navy is now very popular and highlight colours for this winter are grey and berry.

What's the secret to a fantastic pair of shoes? Keep the occasion in mind when you're browsing: are these shoes for everyday wear to work, or can you take a risk for a special occasion? Once you find something you like remember to check the quality and fit.

Comfort matters. The most common mistake people make when buying a pair of shoes is to opt for something they like the look of but which cause them pain! Once you have worn them and they hurt your feet you won't wear them again, so it's money wasted. It's important that when you try them on in store you feel that instant comfort.

Every woman should own a good pair of ankle boots and a pair of long boots. Ankle boots are so versatile because they can be dressed up or down and a classic pair of long boots is great for when the weather gets cold!

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CHARLES CLINKARD

— EST. 1924 —

FINE FOOTWEAR



Closet Confidential

Cotswold stylist and personal shopper Kate Parker answers your questions

Q Can you help a townie? I've been invited for a short walking holiday on the Isle of Skye in September. Plus, I will be moving permanently from London to the Cotswolds later in the year. I feel it will be a good idea to invest in some outdoor pieces. However, I don't think I'm ready to go too 'country'.

A The Isle of Skye can be significantly cooler than the mainland UK so, I've selected some pieces that will keep you warm, dry and comfortable. This olive green waxed jacket **1** (£269), fresh from Barbour's new autumn winter collection, will help you transition perfectly from town to country. Cut in a fashionable parka shape, it will protect you from the elements with its quilted body and cosy detachable fake-fur trimmed hood. These boots by Ariat **2** (£199) not only look great, they have design details to ensure foot stability and support, as well as anti-fatigue technology. I think all footwear should have this! Both boots and jacket are available from outdoor wear specialist Landmark Clothing with stores in Broadway and Marlborough. These black stretch trousers also offer technological wizardry in their fabrication to protect you from both the sun and rain **3** (£44 to £24.95) I'm told it can be very dark on the island, so I've popped in this intense beam torch by Bear Grylls for Berber **4** (reduced from £45 to £24.95) so you can see where you're going when you head out to the pub at night. Both are from trekwear.co.uk. A bit of Scottish cashmere wouldn't go amiss. This coral cropped ribbed knit would look great layered over a shirt **5** (£279 to £169) from brora.co.uk. Cool but classic, high-necked striped top from Whistles **6** (£95). I thought I would also give you a multi-tasking make up product from Terry at Space NK **7** (£28). A subtle lip and cheek tint, it is available in two different colour ways. You can take the girl out of London, but you can't take the London out of the girl.






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Back to *Skincare School*

Getting your skincare act together by mid-teens is advice I wished I'd been given...

Whether you are packing the car to depart for your first year at Uni, or moving up to a new year, there are steps you can take to make sure your skin survives and with the simplest of effort.

Establishing a new set of friends, a new place to live or feeding yourself for the first time can result in big skin changes, physically, emotionally and hormonally.

Student life is beset with challenges, and skincare is never at the top of the list, but feeling confident in how you look makes meeting new people, forging new friendships and getting the best out of these days a step easier. Break outs should not be on the study plans.

The greatest experience I can share is to **CLEANSE**.

Cleansing is crucial to maintaining great skin, it is the best skinvestment you can make, in time and or money. Everything else can be on a budget, but the cleanser is the fundamental, the foundation and the secret of fabulous, simply maintained skin. You don't have to spend an absolute fortune but you do need something that works for and agrees with your skin, so you need to invest some time in finding a cleanser that works for your skin.

To know if you have the correct cleanser, you have to use it, don't take anyone's word for it, trial it and monitor how your skin feels. After cleansing, your skin should;

- a) look clean (!)
- b) feel soft, not tight or itchy
- c) be clean

the way to check this is to use a white towel or mitt or cloth to remove your cleanser and then once the cleanse is complete, to do a final sweep with a fresh mitt or cloth etc. (or the other side of the same cloth) and there shouldn't be

anything there. If there is, do a second cleanse and check. I always say that the first cleanse removes the makeup, the day and the dirt and the second cleanse, cleans the skin.

If you can do this twice a day - then you are setting a clear path to clear skin.

Moisturise, maintaining moisture keeps your skin healthier and suppler.

Find a moisturiser that absorbs easily and doesn't leave your skin feeling heavy or 'covered' I prefer oil or oil based moisturisers but creams will work just as well. Change your moisturiser at different times of the month and different times of the year, I don't mean to keep buying new, I mean to have a few that you interchange or layer. Winter needs more moisture, your 28 day cycle has your skin fluctuating and your diet or occasional overindulgence can throw your skin balance out of the window - be prepared for this and choose your moisturiser to suit your needs.

Exfoliate to encourage cell renewal and turnover.

Dead skin cells need to be sloughed off on a regular, definitely weekly basis. When you exfoliate and remove the outer layer of dead skin cells you dramatically improve the look of your skin, unclogging pores and preventing unnecessary breakout.

When choosing an exfoliator, it should be gentle but thorough. After exfoliation, skin should not feel stripped or aggravated, it should have a healthy glow of pink, increased blood flow and luminescence.

Breakouts and areas of congestion

are a nightmare at any time, but if you are conscious of them, you can really feel inhibited and you can well do without that in the busy 'getting to know everyone' times. Cleansing thoroughly should keep breakouts and congestion to a minimum but eating well is to cleanse your skin from within, avoiding anything manifesting on the surface. I truly, truly believe that diet can sort most skin situations - AVOID, sugar, greasy food, overindulgence in alcohol, milk chocolate, heavy creams and not cleansing and CONSUME more water, vegetables and supplements like flaxseed oil or fish oils to get a good balance of the skin loving omega's

And finally, if you have really concerning skin issues, see a dermatologist not a doctor - they are much better placed to address skin issues correctly, appropriately and swiftly, they will charge, but I can't think of a pair of shoes, an outfit or a handbag that makes up for bad skin - skin confidence is the best accessory a person can have.



New Retirement Village for Witney

FINAL PHASE SALES LAUNCH



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Due to the success of the initial Sales Launch at Richmond Witney, we are now pleased to announce the release of the final phase of retirement apartments ahead of schedule.

We invite you to join us at our launch where:

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- Find out about the accommodation available, view floor plans and computer generated images of the village
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To find out more please call: 01993 768656
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Alison and Tim Rumney of Illume, Cheltenham

The whole tooth

A Cheltenham survey reveals our knowledge gaps

A survey conducted to establish just how much Cheltenham residents know about oral healthcare, following the recent BBC One 'The Truth About Your Teeth' programmes, has revealed that there are significant gaps in dental professional recommendations and what is actually happening in people's homes.

Illume, a family-run dental practice located on Queen's Road, thought it could be useful to find out more about its clients' habits to establish if there was a need for its dental team to provide any additional help and advice.

Practice owner Tim Rumney explains, "We watched the two programmes with interest and, whilst as expected they did contain an element of shock value, the shows also raised some valid points about how best to look after teeth and gums to help prevent decay.

"As dental professionals we tend to think everyone is as informed as we are about oral healthcare, but as our survey has revealed, this simply isn't the case."

The survey contained a range of questions about brushing habits and general knowledge around food and oral health. Only 26% of respondents reported knowing that dentists recommend waiting an hour after eating before brushing teeth, whilst 69% confirmed that they brush their teeth after eating breakfast instead of before. Dental professionals advise people to clean teeth before breakfast to ensure acid in the mouth caused by eating is not brushed into the enamel, which can contribute to decay.

Around 62% of participants also admitted

to occasional or regular snacking during the day - something which the programme flagged as being particularly harmful for teeth due to the constant acid production caused by eating.

The harmful effects of hidden sugars were also discussed in the show which highlighted the experiences of a young girl who had to undergo multiple tooth extractions due to decay caused by sugar in milk! Almost a third of the respondents to Illume's survey admitted that they did not know that milk contained sugar content, whilst 72% stated that they didn't know that eating cheese after a meal helps to neutralise harmful acids in the mouth.

Just under a third of respondents advised that they floss between their teeth whilst an encouraging 47% advised that they use interdental brushes. More people admitted to brushing their gums (68%) than their tongue (32%), but more than half of the respondents (57%) did respond to say they were aware that a build-up of bacteria in the mouth can contribute to organ damage, such as heart disease.

Illume will be using the findings to identify any areas where it can offer additional support and advice to clients. Tim continues, "We will be using the findings to identify areas where we can further improve our communication with patients to ensure they are better aware of the issues raised. We give our clients all the information we believe appropriate and then it's up to them to go home and implement it."

Call Illume on 01242 522230 or visit www.willumedentistry.co.uk



Stratford's Big 10k 2015

The popular 10 kilometre running race falls this year on Sunday, September 13, starting at 9.30am.

Inaugurated in 2009, the race this year will be run over the same course as the previous three. Starting on the recreation ground near the Shipston Road exit and ending on Bancroft Gardens in front of the Shakespeare Theatre.

Stratford's Big 10K is sponsored for the sixth year in a row by Loddors Solicitors and for the second year by Nuffield Health who will be providing sports massage and physiotherapy in their marquee at the finish.

Enter online at www.tempevents.co.uk

Leading the way in dementia support

The West Oxfordshire village of Clanfield is highlighted as the county's leading example of a community caring for those with dementia in a report funded through a Healthwatch Oxfordshire grant programme. The report by the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council draws attention to a group that was set up a year ago and now meets regularly in the local pub to plan support for those in the village with dementia.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire chief executive Rachel Coney says, "This report highlights that more innovative ways of dealing with the growing problem of dementia should be explored and we are pleased to see that there is a promising beginning to better care in the community. The recommendations make it clear that this model is a good one and should be developed. The excellent work of the group in Clanfield is an inspiration to other villages."

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INSPIRED LIVING

*Warwick welcomes an inspirational
new retirement village*

As a new luxury retirement village in Warwick starts to take shape, James Cobb, Sales Director at Inspired Villages, gives an insight into the facilities on offer and what makes it different to other retirement homes.

Inspired Villages in Warwick has been labelled as a new approach to retirement – why is that?

Retirement can sometimes conjure up images of a rather boring existence with many retirement homes considered to be a bit bland. Inspired Villages has been designed to completely change those negative perceptions, with luxurious one and two-bedroom homes on offer, surrounded by landscaped grounds within an idyllic village environment. I've spent the last 15 years listening to people considering a move into retirement villages and have fed those thoughts into our latest villages.

What types of facilities will be available?

We're aiming to create a genuine community at Inspired Villages, so that means providing a broad range of amenities that make residents' lives easier and more fulfilling. In Warwick these include shops, a spa, restaurant, library, café, and hair and beauty salon.



How will you provide for people who want a more active retirement?

We believe retirement should be a time for new beginnings, so we're also creating opportunities for residents to try new hobbies, keep fit and improve their wellbeing. From the spa and relaxation pool through to the modern gym, there are facilities to suit everyone as well as social activities and clubs.

Residents can also benefit from an array of hotel-style services with a maid, concierge and transport, laundry service and onsite handyman all available.

Will the village also cater for those who need supportive care?

Yes, there will be a variety of onsite care services available, whether that's on-going dedicated care or one-off support services.

When can people move in?

We expect the first 49 apartments to be ready in February 2016. Inspired Villages in Warwick provides many types of accommodation for the over 65s. Prices for a two-bed apartment in phase one range from £299,000 to £516,000.

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Village people

New research demonstrates the health benefits of retirement villages

According to the Office for National Statistics, over the next 17 years it is projected that the proportion of people aged over 65 in the UK will rise by nearly 50% to over 16 million. Is it any wonder, then, that we are seeing such growth in the development of retirement villages, such as Richmond Villages who have a village in Painswick and are currently developing a new retirement village in Witney?

On the face of it these retirement communities look great, with specially designed accommodation and numerous facilities such as swimming pools, hair salons, restaurants and bars, ensuring a full and active social life. Add to that the reassurance of extensive services and staff, including a care team, on-site 24 hours a day, it is not hard to see why they have become so popular. But up until recently there hadn't been any solid evidence from the UK to demonstrate the impact of such schemes in terms of the benefits to health and wellbeing of people moving to a retirement village.

That has now changed following research published by Aston Research Centre for Healthy Ageing (ARCHA) at Aston University on a retirement community operated by the Extracare Charitable Trust



The rooftop garden at Richmond Village, Painswick

in Birmingham, and which is a similar concept to the Richmond Villages schemes in the Cotswolds. The three-year study sought to compare changes over time in health, wellbeing and care needs for those who moved to the retirement community with a control sample living in the community.

The results proved to be quite a revelation!

Those that moved to the retirement village used their GP more than the control sample prior to the move, however, following the move both routine and

planned GP appointments reduced by 46%. This was attributed to the availability of care staff who are available to discuss any health-related issues and advise on the best course of action. In addition to dramatic reduction in GP visits, the number of unplanned hospital stays also reduced from an average of 8-14 days to 1-2 days.

It is well documented that loneliness is a common problem for many older people living alone and is a big contributor to depression amongst the elderly. In this regard the study revealed a 14.8% reduction in symptoms of depression amongst those suffering with it, and a substantial 64.3% reduction in numbers of people with significant 'clinical level' depression over the same period. Obviously the saying "it's good to talk" really is true!

Other findings included how 19% of people who were assessed as being 'frail' when moving in had returned to 'resilient' 18 months later and 10.1% had an improvement in autobiographical memory over the 18 months.

So it appears that as well as offering wonderful accommodation and facilities, retirement villages can also significantly improve your health and wellbeing. ■



It is well documented that loneliness is a common problem for many older people living alone

For more information on Richmond Villages call 01993768557 or visit www.richmond-villages.com

Cotswold Life lunch at The Queen's Hotel

Guests joined *Cotswold Life* for a luncheon at The Queen's Hotel. After a drinks reception guests were treated to a fantastic meal with inspiration taken from the hotel's new brasserie menu and Tim Thurston and Karen Cross thanked guests for their continued support of *Cotswold Life*.

The Queen's Hotel overlooks the Imperial Gardens on Cheltenham's Promenade, and offers 84 bedrooms along with the Napier Restaurant and Conservatory, the Gold Cup Bar and Lounge, and will be rebranding to MGallery later this month.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: [ANTONY THOMPSON / THOUSAND WORD MEDIA](#)



Cotswold Life client lunch at The Queen's Hotel



Starters - A mix of cured meats, pates, Terrines, cold cuts, seafoods, pickles, chutneys and breads



Tim Thurston



Rosemary Henderson, Terry and Sara Todd



Angela and Jeremy Phillips



Jo Gauder, Iain and Susan Cother



Main course - Roasted chicken breast, confit potatoes, baby vegetables, pig in blanket and thyme jus



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Guests listen to Tim Thurston at the Cotswold Life client lunch at The Queen's Hotel



Anne Longstaff and Emily Vines



Rachel Jones, Kerry-Ann Markham and Mel Jones



Simone Hancox, Mark Platt and Tim Thurston



David Spragg and Peter Langton



Dessert - Pimms & lemonade, cucumber granita



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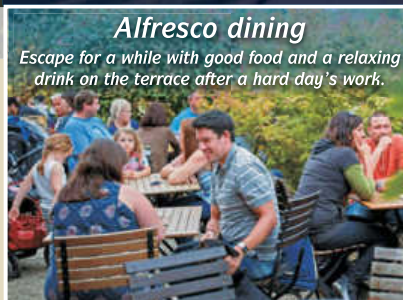
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Cotswolds' Got Talent!

Now I'm not one to judge but it does seem that you can't flick the TV on these days without being faced with some talent show or another - be it singing, baking, dancing and even hairdressing, there's a row of judges all waiting to deliberate, cogitate and digest what's been served up before them. Apparently, our appetite for these talent shows is insatiable which is why they've been multiplying faster than a rabbit in springtime. While I may not join my kids in their Saturday night devotion to Lord Cowell *et al*, despite my ever so male assertions to the contrary, I can see why such shows are popular. Once you've sifted through the chaff, you can be left with some pretty good stuff, and everyone, as we know, ultimately likes a winner.

Readers of this magazine will know that *Cotswold Life* also has its own annual talent show, one that's been running for longer than the *X Factor*, with arguably a great deal more talent than *Britain's Got* has ever shown - yes, I'm talking about the *Cotswold Life* Food & Drink Awards. Now in its 13th year, the Food & Drink Awards celebrate true winners in every sense of the word. Every year, these awards highlight the phenomenal standard of food and drink that we have on our own doorstep. They vindicate the hard work, dedication and devotion that Cotswold producers have tirelessly given to creating and perfecting their product and remind us of how fortunate we are to live in an area with such a vibrant food scene.

As a sponsor of the awards, I have been on the judging panel in the past (though my contribution was probably more Louis Walsh than Simon Cowell) and I tell you, it's a daunting task. I like to think I know a bit about food but the standard of what these local producers are creating is now way past my comfort zone. Here in the Cotswolds, we've got big cheeses that win awards on the international stage and Michelin-starred chefs who are world-renowned.

However, unlike the *X Factor* wannabees, these finalists aren't looking to win us over - it's they who won us over in the first place. Every single producer that made the Food & Drink Awards list was nominated by us, Joe Public, and in my mind that gives each and every one of them huge credibility. So, if I'm looking to try some new cheese, I'm going to go straight for the Cheese of the Year winner, Cerney Ash, and for my next G&T I'm going to try the locally-produced Cotswolds Dry Gin thank you very much! In fact, so tried and tested are these finalists and winners that I'm going to make it my mission to wade through the finalists list over the next few months - a bit like an Egon Ronay guide to *Cotswolds' Got Talent* if you like.

Why don't you join me on my *Cotswold Life* Food & Drink Awards Live Tour and unearth some of these fabulous local products too? I'm sure by Christmas, you'll have a new number one on your hands, but, I'm afraid, you'll have to judge that for yourself! ■

“Why don't you join me on my Food & Drink Awards Live Tour and unearth some of these fabulous local products too?”



Top scorers

Guy's winner: Best Pub Restaurant winner, The Horse and Groom in Bourton-on-the-Hill

One to watch: Food Product of the Year finalist, Blaisden Red Plum Jam by The Artisan Kitchen

The next number one: Cheese of the Year finalist, Double Gloucester by Jonathan Crump's Cheese

Where to buy:

Cerney Ash - Warner's Budgens Bidford on Avon, Moreton-in-Marsh, a variety of farm shops and delis across the Cotswolds

Cotswolds Dry Gin - Sheldon's Wine Cellars, Shipston on Stour, online at www.cotswoldsdistillery.com

Blaisden Red Plum Jam, The Artisan Kitchen - Gloucester Services, a variety of farm shops and delis across the Cotswolds and online at <http://www.theartisankitchen.co.uk>

Jonathan Crump's Double Gloucester - Cheeseworks in Cheltenham, online at www.paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk



Cheese of the Year



Drinks Product of the Year



GourmetLife

WITH MARK TAYLOR



In cider story

A visitor from New Zealand provided the inspiration for Newton Court Farm's diversification 15 years ago

It was a visitor staying in one of the holiday cottages at Newton Court Farm who first gave Paul Stephens and Moira Davidson the idea to make cider.

Using fruit from the Leominster farm's 30 acres of cider apples and perry pears, Newton Court now produces a range of top quality ciders and perries, but it has taken the best part of 15 years to get where the business is today.

"We started making cider back in 2000," says 'chief hunter gatherer and Girl Friday' Moira. "We had a visitor from New Zealand

staying with us in one of our holiday cottages, called Brian Shanks who happened to make cider.

"He saw the apple trees at Newton Court and made us some to try. Paul's imagination was so fired up by this that he took himself off on a course on cider making at Pershore College and it all began from there."

Many farms and small holdings in Herefordshire have always grown cider apples to supply the large cider makers, but Newton Court decided to diversify and produce their own.

The Fleece

One of Witney's oldest inns, The Fleece on Church Green, has re-opened its doors following a complete refurbishment. The popular Georgian watering hole, once a favourite of poet Dylan Thomas when he lived at South Leigh Manor in the 1940s, has been given a fresh look throughout, with warm hues and natural materials inside and a characterful new identity outside,



with the pub's new ram logo sign-written across the front of the building. A new colour scheme of warm mahogany, copper, leaf green and burnt orange has been used to update the bar and eatery and

feature walls are decorated in English-made Royal Oak paper made by Stroud designers Lewis & Wood.

An Oxfordshire blacksmith was also commissioned to make the hanging bracket for the pub's new sign of a friendly-faced woolly ram, which local schoolchildren are being given the chance to name in a competition to mark the pub's re-opening.

"The Fleece is a popular local

gastropub where we work hard to make our guests feel at home, and that was our inspiration in redecorating," says Rebecca Jones, general manager of The Fleece. "We decided to emphasise The Fleece's classic Cotswolds character and added more armchairs upholstered in lovely English woollen fabrics as a nod to the town's blanket making history."

www.fleecewitney.co.uk

"This was part of the cider-making decision," says Moira. "Herefordshire has a very strong cider making tradition and it has always been an agricultural industry for the 'slack' months of the farming year. We have different soil to the cider makers of Somerset so it makes very different cider."



Paul and Moira of Newton Court

The whole farm at Newton Court is organic and it used to have one of the oldest cider apple trees in the area. That tree has since died, but they have managed to graft from it.

"We have added trees over the years to enhance the taste of the cider we make and we love varieties like Yarlington Mill and Tremlett's Bitter.

"The main thing that sets us apart is that we grow the majority of apples ourselves and we press on site, ferment, bottle and label at the farm.

"Artisan cider making is all about provable provenance. We don't make anything from concentrate and we don't ask anyone else to do parts of the process for us.

"We are a small team so everyone sees every stage of the process from picking, cleaning and pressing to delivering to fermenting, bottling and then delivering to pubs and shops."

The most popular cider in the Newton Court range is Gasping Goose made purely from bittersweet apples grown on the farm.

Moira says the drink offers a more distinct 'cider' taste compared to compare to the 'first press' cider made from handpicked dessert apples like Cox's Orange Pippin and

Worcester Pearmain. Other best-sellers include the Panting Partridge Pear Perry and the 2012 Vintage Golden Blush.

"Each variety of apple has its own levels of sugars, tannins and complexities and single varieties also allow a cider maker to offer differing sweetness."

Although much of the Newton Court cider is sold in local pubs, restaurants and shops, an increasing amount is delivered to retailers in London.

"Londoners love proper cider and we send a huge quantity of our keg and draught ciders there. We stock lots of cider festivals and go to a number of food festivals - we will be at Ludlow in September and have lots of exciting new venues and festivals on the horizon."

Moira thinks there is still 'massive' room for growth in the cider industry and says there has never been a better time to be a cider and perry maker.

"The 'Magners effect' has renewed the romantic ideal of lazy summer afternoons with a cold glass of cider and cider is having a 'real ale' moment where people buy for taste and not for price.

"In my opinion, there aren't enough producers making good cider, but it does require a lot of investment and skill to get to a good place.

"People are often scared off from taking 'proper' cider into pubs and bars because the ABV is higher than a real ale so less is sold. We deliberately make cider with a lower than traditional ABV to try to compete with other products."



www.newtoncourt cider.com

FOOD EDITOR'S PICK:

Food editor's pick of the month:

The 13th opening for this independently-owned French chain, Le Bistrot Pierre's debut Bath restaurant has just opened where Jika Jika used to be on George Street. It serves a menu of dependable Gallic classics - start, perhaps, with the grilled whole king prawns with brandy and garlic butter before moving on to steak-frites, but make sure you leave room for the lemon tart.

www.lebistrotpierre.co.uk

Lucknam Park near Bath, has

appointed Ben Taylor as the new Head Chef of its Cookery School. Taylor, who joined Lucknam's Michelin-starred The Park restaurant in March 2010 and was promoted to Brasserie Head Chef in 2013, is passionate about locally-sourced seasonal ingredients. He will be running an innovative new course calendar, under the guidance of Michelin-starred Executive Chef Hywel Jones.

The cookery school has a busy events diary scheduled for the rest of the year. Highlights include Welsh Favourites with Hywel Jones (October 8), a Matt Tebbutt Masterclass (October 17) and Japanese Masterclass with Andrew Kojima on October 16.

www.lucknampark.co.uk

Cam Family Butchers in Dursley has been named Britain's Best Butcher's Shop in the 2015 Meat Management Industry Awards ceremony.

The Meat Management Awards are voted for by readers of Meat Management, the UK's number one monthly magazine for the meat industry, and judged by industry experts.

The shop was opened 28 years ago by Mark Carr, who started out working on his family's farm at Wainloads, near Norton. Cam Family Butchers is no stranger to awards, having won several prizes for its sausages, bacon and pies in recent years.

www.camfamilybutchers.co.uk

Thame Food Festival

The eighth annual Thame Food Festival takes place on September 26, with a stellar line-up of celebrity chefs and a wide range of food and drink on offer. Cooking live this year in the festival's cookery theatre will be Raymond Blanc OBE, who makes the short journey from Belmont Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons. He will be joined by food writer Sophie Grigson and Bath-based



Raymond Blanc

Richard Bertinet, who will be sharing his baking secrets as well as signing copies of his books in the pop-up book shop. The festival's first ever cookery

demo devised especially for children will be with BBC One's MasterChef winner 2013 Natalie Coleman and celebrities from the baking world will also be out in force at the festival, helping to judge the first ever baking competition, The Big Thame Bake, and also rustling up their own delicacies in the cookery theatre. "The Thame Food Festival is truly one of the landmark events in the food calendar and it gets better

each year," says festival patron Lotte Duncan. "It's a day dedicated to good local food and drink with inspirational talks and cookery demos, the pick of the region's producers, authentic street food and live music - all the ingredients for a brilliant day out." The Thame Food Festival takes place from 9am to 5pm on Saturday, September 26, in the heart of Thame town centre. www.thamefoodfestival.co.uk

Hope *springs* eternal

Katie Jarvis visits one of the wonders of Woodchester -
the phenomenally successful bottlegreen drinks company

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: ANTONY THOMPSON

“Now,” says Lynne McAlpine, giving me a kindly but I-hope-you’re-concentrating glance. “You need to carefully pour this sugar-and-water mix into this tube.”

I pour, tongue in the corner of my mouth, making sure I don’t spill a drop. I’m in a lab, making something in outsize test-tubes. It’s slightly disappointing that, as I swirl liquids together, they don’t spontaneously ignite, leaving me with comedy eyebrows. But only slightly. Because I’m making a bottlegreen cordial.

“Bottlegreen!” The name goes right back to my youth - 1989 - when Kit and Shireen Morris started the company. In those heady days, local people would walk the sweet-smelling hedgerows of Stroud, picking delicate white elderflower heads that the Morrisses would turn into cordial at their kitchen sink. No matter how many bottles they produced, all were snapped up from their stalls at farmers’ markets or from the shelves of local delis.

By the time Kit and Shireen sold up in a management buy-out eight years later, the business had reportedly been valued at £10 million, and you could find their distinctive bottles in supermarkets from Waitrose to Sainsbury.

Today, in the factory at Frogmarsh Mill, Woodchester - once a staple of the woollen trade - 15.7 million bottles of elderflower (in its various forms) trundle up and down the production line each year. Local hedges, of course, couldn’t cope; it’s 600,000 litres of concentrate that now make up what has become one of the nation’s most popular drinks.

And Lynne, bottlegreen’s new-product development manager (the ideas genius, in other words), is showing me how it’s done, small-scale. She next gives me cucumber juice to add... **Steady!** (Some of this stuff is unbelievably expensive.) Although Lynne will experiment with fresh fruit and vegetables, it can get complicated when it comes to bigger-scale-production. Even



Katie sampling concentrates for her brew



Katie mixing her brew



Katie putting the fizz in her pressé

variants of the same produce can give very different results. “Spanish limes work well, but others can taste of burnt rubber when you heat them!”

In the rack on the wall, an amazing array of tiny bottles contain essences produced by flavour experts, meaning Lynne can check their synergy together: cranberry; green bell-pepper; lychee; melon; natural sour cherry; strawberry; tomato; vanilla...

“So you might ask yourself, ‘What are melon and parsley going to taste like?’”

Lynne says.

“Dreadful?”

“Possibly! But other times you discover things that taste so good when you just weren’t expecting them to work together.”

Some flavours are more expensive than others. Blackcurrant costs a king’s ransom; saffron makes a king’s ransom look like pocket-money.

So far, in my own test-tube, I seem to have created pondweed. But, by the time I’ve added a little mint concentrate, citric acid, and filtered Cotswold spring water from the onsite borehole that never dries up... After the magnetic stirrer has whirled the particles together... And when the carbonator has added a million tiny bubbles... Then I discover that I’ve created my own rather gorgeous (if I do say so myself) mint and cucumber pressé.

“Ahh!” breathes in Antony, the photographer, as a delicious sharp, clear aroma fills the air. “All bottlegreen drinks go so well with a shot of gin...”

Of course, you could make this at home. A syrup of 50/50 sugar and water; a cucumber and some mint blitzed in a liquidiser and sieved through a pair of clean tights; citric acid (the sort you get in wine-making shops), or lemon juice, to enhance the flavours; a shot of fizzy water and - hey presto!

Except that bottlegreen has an extra-special ingredient: the borehole on the Frogmarsh site. It’s the source of gorgeously pure water - as well as the source of a great story.



How to drink elderflower cordial:

You've heard of wine-matching; bottlegreen offers a soft-drink matching service to bars and restaurants. So what should you eat with an elderflower cordial?

"Oriental chicken or citrus chicken dishes," brand manager, Jennie Speers says. "White meats go very well, as do most prawn dishes and white fish. Sea bass and Dover sole are an excellent pairing as the fresh, light fish complements the delicate floral nature of the elderflower."

Jennie also suggests strong cheeses such as feta and Stilton, and fresh, herby salads. "Stilton doesn't overpower the elderflower but lingers and dances on the palate with that sweet taste."

Katie Jarvis making her own pressé drink at bottlegreen with the help of new product development manager Lynne McAlpine

"When Kit and Shireen moved bottlegreen to this site, they were really keen on using Cotswold spring water," brand manager Jennie Speers tells me. "So they hired a dowser - Jim Terrett - who was a local legend."

Jim finally settled on a location out at the front, telling the Morrisises that, if they were to dig down 50ft, they'd find a borehole. Trustingly, they rang contractors without a second thought and told them to bring along a digger: 50ft down, no water; 150ft down, dry as the Sahara; 200ft down, we're talking moon-rock...

"Unsurprisingly," laughs Jennie, "they were all panicking at this stage. So they got on the phone to Jim and asked, 'What are you playing at? Should we move to a different site?' Jim told them to stay put but to bring the pipes back up to 50ft."

As it turns out, they had been a fraction away from success all along: a bit of shuffling and it was Dallas all over again. Instead of oil, though, this gold was in H₂O-form.

Since then, that water has been used to produce a range of cordials and pressés popular the world over. And many of those flavours - from perennials such as ginger

6 It's slightly disappointing that, as I swill liquids together, they don't spontaneously ignite, leaving me with comedy eyebrows

and lemongrass to limited editions such as blackcurrant and coffee - spring from the imagination of Lynne herself. How does she ensure - after dreaming up ideas in her lab in the wilds of Woodchester - that any new concoction will hit the right note?

"We've got a lot of 'filters'," she says, "so we might come up with 10 possibilities, which we'll run past our team of experts - our own MD and other key players within the business. According to whether they say 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe', we'll then take some of them further."

Some ideas are led by worldwide trends - sparked by Gwyneth pictured with a can of coconut water; or Madonna proclaiming a love for ginger tea.

"But most of our products taste so good that it doesn't matter whether or not they're trending worldwide," Lynne says.

The company also has a team of brand ambassadors - anyone can join - who form taste-panels to give their verdicts. "We get mums and daughters coming along; we've had a nine-year-old; an 80-year-old. As well as flavours, we'll even run new labels past them. Most of them live within a 20-mile radius, but we can do it remotely, too, by sending out samples with questionnaires, if people are further afield."

Nowadays, this is a company with a £20 million turnover - an astonishing feat. It's a Cotswolds success story, without a doubt. Yet even with its multinational face, there's still much that's recognisable of its origins: an impressive factory, housed within an old Stroud cloth mill; a line of exotic flavours, infused into clear Cotswold spring water; and a production-line of millions of bottles on a site surrounded by fields that still - whenever May sunshine begins to warm the land - whiten with the blossoms of elderflower. ■

You can find out more about bottlegreen at www.bottlegreendrinks.com

Talking turkey



Turkeys aren't just for Christmas; they're for eggs, too, say Sarah and Dave Hawkeswood. Katie Jarvis went to visit their flock, to find out why these eggs are being gobbled up by enthusiastic converts

Spring is in the air, up on the high Wolds of Oakridge. Dandelions the colour of yolks warp and weft into a carpet of deep yellow; yellow that meets and mingles with the blue of a cloudless sky to create a lush sward of green. As breezes tease out hazes of pollen, warmed by early sunbeams, a young turkey's thoughts turn to...

"Stop it! Off right now!" says Sarah Hawkeswood, firmly removing this particular Lothario from his chosen damsel. She tuts. "He's just showing off to the ladies."

On the plus side, he's incredibly handsome: a Norfolk Black, whose blue, red and black feathers fan out like a peacock. His snood (the fleshy bit on his forehead) is a vibrant red, filled with excitable, oxygen-rich blood; (when it morphs to deoxygenated blue, the girls can relax). The point is, it's not easy being a turkey groupie; not only do the males dispense with flowers and chocolates, but this chap weighs around 40lb to the ladies' 18.

"When they mate, they can damage their backs with claws," Sarah says. "We're going to have to move him elsewhere."

Sarah might not be impressed with his amorous activities (the girls appear to be on the fence) but the indigenous Indians of the Americas - from where the birds originate - were far more taken. Many of

their dances were inspired by strutting turkey displays; many of their headdresses were made from their multifarious feathers. Navajo legends tell that, when all creatures fled from the Great Flood by climbing bamboo, the wild turkey only managed the lowest branch; and the waters washed away the colours on its feather-tips.

Watching Sarah and Dave Hawkeswood's flock of 120 females, gobbling, grubbing, gambolling round this two-acre plot in noisy harmony, it's not difficult to see why the US claimed the turkey as its national bird, in heady competition with the bald eagle.

The more puzzling proposition is why the British are so inconsistent in their love affair. Despite the fact that its meat is rich in protein, chock-full of vitamins and minerals, we bring it out for one binge-day of the year, then go cold turkey for the rest.

While Sarah Hawkeswood is vegetarian - none of her birds are sold for meat - she is determined to spread the turkey gospel in the form of their eggs: gorgeous, cream-coloured ellipses, spray-painted with brown speckles. She puts a heavy, thick-shelled beauty into my hand. "Look," she says, pointing out the different patterns. "Each egg has its own pigment; the ones that look similar will be laid by the same turkey. Some have lots of speckles; some hardly any at all."

Twice the size of a chicken egg, they get



Sarah and Mike Hawkeswood with some of their birds

bigger with each passing year of a turkey's life. "Ours are in their third year now. It's a bit of an experiment to see how long they'll live - a turkey can go on into its 20s."

The point is, of course, most female turkeys will be history by Christmas; and egg-laying wouldn't naturally start until the following spring. Here, up on this grassy Oakridge field where they're free to graze, they lay every 36 hours: "One egg at a time, in the same place. If you leave them, they'll have a communal clutch. Each turkey will walk in, lay an egg, and walk out; then there will be three or four who allocate themselves as the broody ones, who pull the eggs in, make a big, communal nest, and sit on them all."

A kindergarten, in other words. Do they notice when Sarah takes the eggs?

"They make a bit of a protest when I put my hands underneath but they soon forget about it."

She and Dave sell at Cheltenham and Stroud Farmers' Markets - under the name Phoenix Free Range - along with quail, goose, Indian runner duck, Cotswold Legbar and Burford Brown eggs. It took people a while to adjust to the idea of turkey eggs. Now, they're being gobbled up.

"People in Stroud, particularly, are a bit more adventurous: it's a great place to have a market. Most customers begin by loving the look of the eggs. Once they try them, they spread the word. We had John Torode visit the other week but, by the time he'd got to the stall, the turkey eggs had all gone!"

As she and Dave show me round the rest of the site, we're greeted by curious turkeys which follow and chat - friendly to the last. "We've got some aggressive cockerels but I've never met an aggressive turkey. People can think they look scary but it's just the birds showing off - they're from the same family as the peacock: Galliformes." There's Gary, for example, who is especially genial. Dressed in designer gear - an iridescent mustard-red-gold - he insists on making our acquaintance. It's in the genes: his twin brother, Bobby, once performed in Giffords Circus, though has since retired.

Dave, Sarah's husband, specialises in show-birds (you probably don't need telling that the couple met at a poultry show), breeding and selling for exhibitions. It's a hobby but one at which he excels: two years ago, his Cuckoo Cochins took 'best in show' at Malvern. He shows me a chicken he's created himself - a 'Frizzle-Coated': white as freshly-fallen snow, with curly feathers the texture of silk. "It took me seven years to produce birds like this," he says. "There is a breed called a Frizzle but, unlike mine, it doesn't have feathers on its feet. It's all about genetics; you pick the best of the youngsters and keep on improving."

The Hawkeswoods' true 'heritage turkeys' - not the ordinary egg-layers but specialist breeds - are kept safely separate in roomy pens. Many are on the verge of extinction: allowing them to mate with other varieties would ruin the bloodline. Much thinner than the commercial birds -



Turkey eggs



A Whites Turkey

6 This all started because I had one pet turkey who laid an egg, and I just thought, 'Wow! Look how beautiful it is! Why aren't these in the shops?'

which are flightless, heavy and meatily double-breasted - these traditional breeds are real beauties. There are the Slates, feathers blue with black flecks; Narragansetts, named after the East Coast bay, with their silver-flecked breast. And true Norfolk Blacks (pure black, unlike the Hugh Hefner of the turkey world whom we met earlier, with his blue and red rogue feather-genes): "You can still see a slight shadowing of where they've got the wrong bloodline," Sarah points out. "Over the years, people have let them fly round farmyards and they've bred with Bronzes." And British Whites, which are so rare, only half a dozen people in the UK still have them.

Clearly, this is turkey paradise. If I were to go to an intensive, commercial breeder, what would I see that would horrify me?

"Almost everything," Dave says. "Kept indoors for one thing, unless they were free-range - but very few are. The volume of them to the amount of land means they're very crowded. Beaks cut right back, poor things."

"And they feather-peck," chips in Sarah. "Let me show you a sight you'll never forget."

She leads me to a pen containing newly-arrived ex-battery hens, whose wings are stripped to bare bone. A few have already died of shock. If these sad specimens were to peek over the top of the pen, they'd see their own happier future in



A Heritage Bronze male

the form of glossy, sleek-feathered chickens running round - former battery hens which have now recovered.

For Sarah and Dave, it's all about the love of these birds though they hope, eventually, that the turkey-egg business will make money: it's still early days. Even so, selling an egg for 50p, as Sarah does, is not nearly as lucrative as selling a whole turkey for the dinner-table.

She shrugs: "I could make a lot of money by selling them at Christmas but I couldn't do that. It would be blood money. I would rather be poor!"

"This all started because I had one pet turkey who laid an egg, and I just thought, 'Wow! Look how beautiful it is! Why aren't these in the shops?'"

She's absolutely right. Aside from the list of yet more health benefits - lots of Omega numbers; barrels-full of good cholesterol; lots of carotenoids giving the eggs that deep, orangey colour - there's the baking. I take them home and produce the best cakes ever. Seriously. Rich, risen, spongy cakes with a delicious taste all of their own.

And the best way to eat them?

"Poach them," Sarah and Dave agree, "making sure the yolks are kept soft. Put them over fresh asparagus, in season. Grate some of your favourite hard cheese over the top, and sprinkle with sea salt."

What else to add, except: Get cracking. ■

To buy Phoenix Free Range turkey eggs, visit Cheltenham Farmers' Market, 9am-2pm on the second and last Friday of each month, in the Promenade; or Stroud Farmers' Market, every Saturday from 9am-2pm, in the Cornhill Market Place and surrounding streets.

Sarah and Dave are part of the new Cotswolds Choice brand scheme, promoting landscape-friendly local products, led by Stephen Aiano on behalf of the Cotswolds Conservation Board. For more information, visit www.cotswoldsaonb.org.

Table talk in Tetbury

From Old Spot sausage appreciation to vegetarian and Tex Mex treats, this year's Tetbury Food and Drink Festival looks set to be a sure-fire hit with Cotswold foodies

TETBURY FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL 2015: September 16-20

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: JOSEPH DART

A great many people look forward to visiting Tetbury each September when the town hosts a number of tasty foodie happenings, culminating in a large farmers'-style market offering a wide range of locally-produced goodies, from wine to beer and cider, even a locally-distilled range of gins and soft drinks; through cheeses, chutneys and pickles, breads, cakes and pies, sausages, burgers, and exotic fare such as chillis, pistachios, olives and much, much more.

Running from September 16 to 20, 2015, everything kicks off on the Wednesday at The Close Hotel when the Gloucester Old Spot Sausage Appreciation Society hold their annual meeting celebrating local pork, and in particular sausages created by renowned butcher John Newman from Jessie Smiths. Each year a competition is run throughout the town, to see who can create the most imaginative sausage recipe

using Gloucester Old Spot pork, and the winner of the adult section is then invited to join the Society dining on the resulting sausage. This year we are delighted to announce that we will also be joined by *Cotswold Life's* resident poet, Peter Wyton, who has written a special poem for this event entitled 'Table Talk', and he will be reading this and a couple of his other verses to an enthusiastic and appreciative audience.

The Big Pan belonging to Jessie Smiths will be cooking up a storm on the Saturday and the waft of tasty sausages and burgers down Long Street is too tempting to miss. There will also be a chance to tour local vineyard Bow in the Cloud sometime during the festival.

Another favourite is the vegetarian evening held at Café 53 when Pink Cab co-owner Tina Stevenson works alongside resident chef Piotr, to put on an evening of fun dining when even confirmed carnivores are amazed to have their taste

buds tickled by a veritable cornucopia of vegetarian offerings.

Just down the road at Highgrove House and Gardens, the private residence of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, plans are in hand for a very special evening hosted by local chef Rob Rees, MBE. Rob has been a long-time supporter of the festival and a few years back set up The Wiggly Worm, a charity that exists to improve health, wellbeing and self-esteem amongst the vulnerable, disadvantaged or seldom heard; along with The Star Bistro a joint investment between The Wiggly Worm and the National Star College, offering a quality dining experience, creating a safe learning and working environment enabling students with learning or physical disabilities to gain skills and qualifications and confidence to gain future employment. For more details on the Highgrove event go to www.highgrovegardens.com and to learn more about the work of the Wiggly Worm go to www.thewigglyworm.org.uk

A few months back now David and Tanya Kelly opened the Stargazy Fish Bar,





situated next door to their award-winning Priory Inn. You can eat in the bar, in the gardens or take away your order to enjoy freshly-prepared and cooked fish and chips at home. They make their own special recipe batter blending Shipton Mill flours and Cotswold Brewing Company premium lager, as well as making the accompanying all-important bits and pieces such as mushy peas and twice-cooked chips.

The Royal Oak in Tetbury will be holding a series of exciting all-new events to this year's festival, including the 'Tortuous Tetbury Teaser' and 'Condiments of the Chef' quiz; Wednesday, September 16 is World Guacamole Day and that night they will hold a Tet Mex with a fire pit and make a giant guacamole to celebrate. Thursday through to Sunday they will be inviting special guest chefs to take over their Airstream 'Oak Cantina', bringing unique and intriguing street food offerings.

There will be a series of cookery demonstrations at the Sunday market. Returning by popular demand will be chef Leon Rook, showcasing his street food venture offering tasty bites, including

home-smoked ribs and Cuban-style pork. Lorraine from Vowley Farm will be demonstrating the skills of sausage making; chefs from a nearby army battalion are planning to come along, and it's also hoped that Andrew Kojima 'Koj' will be able to attend if his busy schedule allows. After reaching the final of MasterChef, he moved from a career in finance to one in food and cooking and now works as a freelance chef, food writer and cookery teacher, based just up the road in nearby Shipton Moyne.

A recent culinary addition to a tasty Tetbury includes the Italian restaurant Ciao, and a gentle stroll around the town will bring you to many unique foodie outlets including: Hobbs House Bakery, Quayles Deli, The House of Cheese, several cafés and teasshops and even bike shop Velaton serves up their specially-blended coffee. ■

Up-to-date information can be found at www.tetburyfooddrinkfestival.com with events and exhibitors being added and updated on a regular basis.

Competition:

Win a pair of tickets to the Gloucester Old Spot Sausage Appreciation Dinner at The Close Hotel on Thursday, September, 17.

To enter the competition email your answer and full contact details, quoting code CLTFF091, to competition@cotswoldlife.co.uk. Alternatively, you can post your answer and full contact details to Cotswold Life Tetbury Food Festival competition - CLTFF091, c/o Katie Tait, Cumberland House, Oriol Road, Cheltenham, GL50 1BB.

Q: In which year did HRH The Princess Royal become patron of the Gloucestershire Old Spot Breed Society?

Terms & conditions: Competition closes at midday on Friday, September 4, 2015. The dinner does not include drinks. Full Archant terms and conditions can be found at www.cotswoldlife.co.uk





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Tales from the top of Stroud

There are some strange goings-on as Katie and family visit Bisley House

So here's a top-of-Stroud story from me, an atheist sceptic who, nonetheless, files some things under 'Mysterious'; 'Unexplained'.

I probably need to begin with when we moved from Brussels to Minchinhampton, and several things happened. The first was that the rector-at-the-time (whom I continue to adore) came to visit, saying, "I hear you're a journalist, Katie" - how touching, to take such an interest! - and I nodded, eyes misting with the warmth of the welcome.

"Good," he continued. "You can edit the parish magazine."

Next, I was asked to join the local NSPCC committee, the chair of which turned up to see me at the very second I ran out of the house, screaming, "I'VE LOST MY TWO-YEAR-OLD!" He was subsequently found wandering on Besbury Common.

And then there was a phone call from a man with a French accent. "Cat-eee," he breathed. "Aye wander if itz possibull to 'elp me?'"

It turned out to be the-then chief exec of Cotswold Care Hospice (as it was), asking me to interview a series of people who'd used the facilities. One patient, in a wheelchair with MS, told me that most nights he dreamed he was flying; a woman, who used the hospice's grief counselling, spoke of the terrible rage that twisted her insides after the death of her beloved husband.

And then there was... well, let me call him Ivan G; (his real name was unusual, distinctive). He was in remission from cancer but, at one stage, had had reason to believe he was terminally ill. "It is actually an exciting time," he told me. "You can't miss out on anything; you don't bother mincing words. There's a kind of freedom, a feeling of wanting to be in the moment."

How many times, he asked, are we careless with everyday life - talking to a friend without really listening; half-watching a programme on TV that we can replay later? "But when you think you

haven't got a future, it's different."

We got on so well - in a friendly, nice way - but I never saw him again. I often wondered about him, though. Very often. This man who - in less than an hour - said things I've never forgotten.

Ed, resplendent in the silk-lined robes of a 'master', has just graduated. He's spent the last year studying ants. "They're just robots; they work on algorithms," he says; but, whenever I watch them carrying hurried treasure to their nests, I can't separate that from cleverness. Or from us.

So we end up in Bisley House, somewhere I've had recommended to me. It's in a part of Stroud I love, right up at the top, which gives off airs of free-spirited intellectualism. (Well, you've got to aspire.)

"Do you do gluten-free food?" I ask, for Ellie.

“You can't miss out on anything. You don't bother mincing words

"Eighty percent of our menu is gluten-free," the nice person on the phone says. "And we'll warn the chef that one of your party is coeliac so we can be extra-careful." Umm. Slightly confusing, then, to find burgers in rolls and a pint as a highlight of the evening. What's more, the 'gf' symbol is right beside beer-marinated chicken.

Beer? Gluten-free???

The message comes back: the chef is SO embarrassed! What's more, ALL the chicken has been soaked in beer.

Ho hum. But the boys love the burgers and pint for £10. My chicken (yes, the beer-marinated chicken with broad beans, corn purée, carrot and herb salad at £13.50) is odd, and not in a good way. The starters

of potatoes bravas and pan-fried chorizo in red wine - and the Eton mess for pudding - are fine. But Ellie's raspberry sorbet has run out - a fact they tell us not when we order but only as the other puddings arrive.

Next evening, I bump into two friends walking along our footpath to catch a bus into Stroud so they can enjoy a tipple. "Off to Bisley House," they say, innocently. "We love it!"

Fair enough.

Ah, yes. So back to Ivan. Ten years-or-so after our one and only meeting, I'm trying to park for Stroud Farmers' Market - there's not a space in sight. I eventually drive up to the top of Stroud and, somehow, find a gap; and then I wander down, using streets I rarely use - maybe have never used before.

And, as I walk down one random street, for some reason I glance to my right, towards a pub. And, for some other reason, my eyes latch onto the white-chalk message on a blackboard outside.

It reads, "We just thought you would like to know that Ivan G died last night."

Ivan: the man who told me, "We are all under the illusion that we have a tomorrow. But I have come to realise how important each day is."

And I file under 'Unexplained'. ■

Bisley House Bar and Restaurant, Middle St, Stroud GL5 1DZ, 01453 751328; www.bisleyhousecafe.co.uk

Ambience 6



Service 6



Food 7



Value for money 7*



*the burgers and pint (pulled pork; ground beef; Portobello mushroom and Camembert) are excellent value

Our restaurant reviews are completely independent. Katie arrives unannounced and pays for her meal.



A feast of *artisan treats*

After the huge success of last year's inaugural event, Broadway Food Festival is returning to The Green and is promising to be bigger and better than ever

Broadway Food Festival: Sunday, September 13, 10am-4pm

Building on the tremendous success of last year's first Broadway Food Festival, the event this year promises to be even better! Make a note in your diary to come to The Green, Broadway, on Sunday, September 13, for a really special festival with the emphasis on top quality local produce. It's a unique opportunity to meet the local people who grow and create the top quality food and drink that can be found - all year round - in this lovely village's shops and eateries.

Local growers and farmers will be showing and sampling seasonal produce and meat, and - amongst others - artisan bakers, brewers, millers, distillers, jam makers, bee keepers, cider makers, confectioners and cheese makers will explain their crafts - with plenty of opportunities for us to taste the delicious results!



The welcoming Broadway Hotel on The Green is handy for the festival, and its chef will join others from the fine hotels, restaurants and pubs in the area to show us great ways to use fantastic local products in a programme of practical cooking demos. Additional family attractions will include a foodie art competition for children (visit www.broadway-cotswolds.co.uk/food-festival for details) and a splendid show of vintage and classic cars. As well as food-to-go on The Green, Broadway's own

cafés, pubs and restaurants will provide their usual wide choice of delicious food and drink. Why not try the newly-launched Barrington's Brasserie at the iconic Lygon Arms Hotel?

With the very best local food and drink at its core, this promises to be an unforgettable day for the whole family. Taking place in the heart of this quintessentially English village and surrounded by unique boutique shops and popular cafés, pubs and restaurants, the Broadway Food Festival is not to be missed! ■

Broadway Food Festival is being held on Sunday, September 13, 2015, from 10am to 4pm, on The Green, Broadway WR12 7AA. Admission FREE. www.broadway-cotswolds.co.uk/food-festival

Broadway Food Festival is sponsored by Cotswold Life, Wychavon District Council and Broadway Parish Council.

PUB

Favourite food: I have to admit to being a bit of a fussy eater, but I do enjoy Skinner's dried food. I love it when there's some leftover veg added, though; my favourites are carrots and broccoli. Mum used to have a Labrador which bolted its food down, but dinner is a much more sedate affair for me and I'll often pick a biscuit out of my bowl and go off and enjoy it before returning for another one.

Favourite pub snack: It has to be North-Oxfordshire-based Trophy Pet Foods' fish skins. They had a stall at Enstone Show last year and I first tried them there - they're really crunchy and I love them!

Favourite customer: There's a chap called Dave who comes down here on his horse and cart every Sunday lunchtime. Actually, he's a bit of a favourite of everyone as he's such a character. He keeps chickens and working dogs and treats us with a lot of respect without fussing over us. Lovely man.

Walk of choice: Mum's a Cotswold Voluntary Warden, looking after three parishes - Salford, Over Norton and Cornwell - and so I really enjoy it when we walk the paths. I have a fairly low boredom threshold so the variety is wonderful.

Favourite spot at bar: I like to sit with mum and dad at the bar - on my special mat, of course.

Favourite toy/collar, etc: There's one toy which is very dear to my heart - I've had it since I was very small, and have been careful never to damage it. You can see me with it in the picture on the right... meet 'Squeaky' the reindeer!

Dislikes/pet hates: I hate to finish a walk, and I also dislike hosepipes - I won't allow anyone to clean me with one so I have a bath in the River Glyme at the end of a walk every day instead.

Dog's danglies (top ale/cider): Hooky, Haymaker and Cotswold Lager

Hair of the dog (hangover cure): Carbohydrates! The late drinkers on a Sunday lunchtime are treated to Yorkshire puddings and roast potatoes in bowls on the bar.

DOG

Name: Alfie
Address: c/o The Crown Inn, Church Enstone
Age: Four
Sex: Male
Breed: Black & white Springer Spaniel



With mum being a Cotswold Voluntary Warden, life for outdoorsy Alfie is pretty sweet

I live in Enstone with Kate and Ted - it's just a four-minute walk across the fields to the Crown, so couldn't be handier.

I turned four years old in July, and what a party we had! There were five of my doggy friends there, as well as 14 of the two-legged variety. It's become a bit of a tradition for us to have a party in the field next to our house before we all head to the Crown for a big late lunch to celebrate.

I get on very well with other dogs; I have a healthy respect for the big ones, and will have a sniff around the pub to see who's in before settling down on my special mat, which is kept behind one of the settles ready for when I visit. I've been visiting the pub since I was tiny, so the mat was originally used as a bed to insulate me from the stone floor, and I feel instantly at home when I'm sitting on it now.

I come from a litter of dogs from Adam Tatlow's, near Guiting Power (he of Cotswold Keeper fame - www.cotswoldkeeperphotography.com), and I

was the only black-and-white boy. Ted really wanted a boy, and when he saw me with my solitary big, black spot on my back, he said to Adam, "That's the one!"

I'm a pretty laid-back chap and take most things in my stride; I was trained to be around sheep when I was very young, and know to respect horses - always giving them a wide berth. Mum keeps chickens, too, and I'll wait patiently outside the pen when she goes in to feed them... it takes a lot to get me flustered.

Mum's one of the organisers of the Enstone Show [on Saturday, August 29 this year, being opened by local Graeme Garden] and so I'll be taking part in one of the dog shows there again. It's great fun, and hopefully I'll come away with a prize!

If you'd like to feature as a *Cotswold Life* Pub Dog, please email candia.mckormack@archant.co.uk or write to Cotswold Life, Archant House, Oriel Road, Cheltenham, GL50 1BB.

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In the lap of the gods



From the belt-busting excesses of all-inclusive decadence, to the difficulties of post-Crisis poverty, Katie Jarvis experiences the many side of Greece's complex but infinitely beautiful personality

Through the densely-shaded groves where squat trees are budding green with the famous fat olives of Halkidiki; past the production line of bustling ants hefting bursting seeds - twice their own body-size - back to deep black tunnels that snake beneath the path; beyond the stray dogs that lounge affably together on the smoking beach like old men arguing politics over syrupy black coffee; up the dusty slopes towards the hill-peaks that look towards Mount Olympus, where Zeus's luscious handmaids prepare endless bowls of sweet ambrosia... there sits a chapel, leaning against a cutaway escarpment of a dusty bank, deep in the heart of nowhere.

If you stand just above it, breathing in pine-heavy air, you can look down through its high open window to see preparations for a sacrament laid out. There is infinite

beauty in those rough, warm stones; a blessing of timelessness; an unbroken chain of history.

But that's when you notice...

That the chapel window isn't open: it's glassless. And below it, staining the ground red and black, lie its shards. And then you realise that it's a Sunday morning, yet its solid-wood door is tight-shut against the world; sometime locked by a heavy-hearted priest.

Empty, hollow, deserted. No one is celebrating today.

It takes us two-and-three-quarter hours

to fly from the dank of London into the little airport at Thessaloniki. It takes three-and-a-half hours to fly back. This, I'm assuming, could be down to my own personal weight gain. (I'm surprised Ryanair don't squash me into a baggage gauge, shake their heads and charge excess.) I have found a perfect holiday.

We're staying at Ikos Oceania, on the coast of Halkidiki, probably the best all-inclusive ever - certainly for the money. You can't sit down - on sandy beach or by rippling pools - without a smiling member of staff offering a drink (labelled wine, including superb Greek-own, cocktails, beers - pretty much anything you want), a snacky salad or an ice cream. Even the

minibar in our room - that looks out onto the lapping blue of the Aegean Sea - is gratis, refilled with miniatures of Gordon's gin, Johnnie Walker, bottles of wine, water, juice. Free room service is 24/7. Golly gosh.

And then there are the meals. Cooked breakfast: sizzling made-to-order omelettes, bacon, sausages, elegant glasses of sweet yogurt, breads of all description, Greek cheeses, fruits, pastries, cakes. Buffet lunch is followed by buffet dinner - or you can dine, at no extra cost, in one of the à la carte restaurants, if you book. There are four: Anaya Asian, Fusco Italian, Provence French and - everyone's favourite - Ouzo Greek. The menus are stunning: mille-feuille of asparagus with salmon escalope; melon and Muscat wine soup with sardines on toast; foie gras crème brûlée; (we're only just at the main course here) sea bass fillet or duck breast with grapes and spelt risotto; finished with lemon tart. If you miss having cheese, you can nip into the buffet restaurant on the way out. (No one is counting.) All I can remember of the Greek restaurant, where the food also goes on forever, is vast amounts of Ouzo before we even begin.

When the weather dulls, we join some of the free classes, clumsily learning to salsa; to speak Greek (Pós se léne? Ti kanis?); and to cook moussaka with a beaten-egg sauce,



Katie Jarvis at Thessaloniki

layers as perfect as strata on a mountain timeline. Another day, I book a massage (treatments, unsurprisingly, do cost extra) in the Ikos Spa. "You feel tense; perhaps you sit at computers for long periods?" asks my masseuse, as she unravels Gordian knots as intricate as any tied by the great King of Phrygia.

We do tear ourselves away. Firstly, to wander along the seashore, past the bobbing fishing harbour with its listing Queen Elizabeth tanker - strange to see - into Nea Moudania with its impressive sand-castle church. Our walk is led by Alex Lodge, one of the hotel entertainers. Chatty, ordinary in the nicest of ways, he's transformed in the evening into a mysterious illusionist who cuts Anastasia - our Greek teacher - in two.

Another day, we take the readily-available hotel bikes far along the shore, past empty beach-bars and shut-up apartment blocks - umbrellas furled; tables stacked; blinds shut - which will light up with vibrant life as the season waxes fat with holiday-makers.

And then, one salt-scented, gentle night, as we stroll along the strand bounded by a dream-sea, we come across a young man lying on the ground, his bike a broken skeleton beside him. There's blood. And he's screaming, this handsome lad in the prime of life, his friends forming a helpless, protective barrier around him.

Vasilis drives us into the heartland of rural Greece, away from the three fingers of the Halkidiki peninsula that thrust into the sea: Kassandra, once belonging to giants who fought with the gods; Sithonia, a son of the gods; and Athos, where even the female swallows, swifts and martins must think twice before landing amongst this strictly men-only land of monks.

As Vasilis negotiates twisty roads lined with mini-chapels, Tzouli, our guide, talks of the 'Crisis'. "Those shrines," she points out, "used to contain a bottle of olive oil and a candle, left by families of the victims of road accidents. But since the Crisis, they're empty - people began stealing them." She blames the politicians, and the banks who lent money that no one could repay, for the ghost villages with rusty railings and yards reclaimed by sprawling weeds. For the empty-shop towns. For the fact that both her sons now live in England. Aristotle, whose statue looks over many a village square, must be pondering on where the wisdom has flown.

There again, the Greeks are sadly used to ups and downs; comings and goings. Nea Moudania was named 'new' by some of the 1.2 million refugees from Asia Minor, who



Ikos Oceania, Halkidiki

flooded here in the 1920s at the end of the disastrous Greco-Turkish War. Strangely, it was the picturesque coastal areas that provided land for these traumatised settlers: the Saracen and Arabic pirates of yore, who terrorised the Aegean, had long persuaded locals to build far inland.

We stop in Arnaia, a traditional village of huge charm, where the Giatradiko Folk Museum is an 18th century house whose wooden balcony defies gravity: it's one of the few buildings not to have been burnt to

6 Seriously, it would be hard to beat Ikos Oceania: it might not be the prettiest of buildings but its generosity knows no bounds

the ground during the tribulations of the Greek War of Independence. Black and white photographs show a festival of the 1920s, where the men (no women allowed) sit stony-faced at long tables or group together to play bouzouki. Women, on the other hand, are celebrated in the stunning textiles of the nearby House of Giannoudena, mistresses of weaving that traces its origin back to Arachne, daughter of Idmo, King of Lydia. She dared to challenge the goddess Athena; her punishment was to metamorphose into a spider, forever spinning its intricate patterns. The traditional blue of the Arnaian cloth, dyed with tinctoria indigofer, rivals sea and sky.

Honey, farmed since prehistoric settlers first tamed the bee, is an essential part of Halkidiki's income; so we visit the shop of Georgakas, the beekeeper, whose family has been producing this nectar in the mountains around us since 1948. His wife offers golden jars of honey made by bees with differing appetites - those who feed

on thyme, Erica, wild flowers, pine or oregano. The shop is deserted; I buy a jar of heavy thyme honey, wishing I could take more... and not just because it's utterly delicious.

Finally, via St Stephen's Church, which gleams with the kind of gold I thought unique to a command of 'Open Sesame!', we stop at a vineyard in the hills, run by the enigmatic Claudia Papayianni. Half-Greek, half-German (her father is from the mountains of Arnaia), she came back home after studying abroad, to set up a vineyard in 2003. "The wine business was male-dominated so no one saw me as serious," she says, with a toss of her beautifully-cut hair. "They saw me as some girl wanting to spend her father's money." She endured sexual harassment - not helped, she explains, by her good looks - until the quality of her wine suddenly got people's attention. In a traditional society - where her leather jacket, Hard Rock t-shirt and jeans are a far cry from aprons and kerchiefs - this is achievement indeed.

There have been difficulties, particularly from more extreme weather conditions that have become prevalent in the past two years. With her organic vines, that's hard to fight: "But I have a contract with God," she says.

We taste her wines, which indeed are wonderful (around a third are exported to America, Germany, Belgium and elsewhere); I particularly love the golden Alexandra, made from the grape variety Malagousia. Named after her daughter, it begins with soft wildflowers and ends with a teenaged peppery kick. As I leave, Claudia hands me a bottle of rosé. "Remember," she says, "the man thinks he is the head, but the woman is the neck. She decides which way to turn." ■

Katie Jarvis stayed at Ikos Oceania at Nea Moudania: ikosresorts.com/oceania
You can learn more about the wines of Claudia Papayianni at www.cp-domaine.gr
Tzouli, tour guide, is available for bookings at tzouliguide@gmail.com



TUDOR HALL

Open Morning

Saturday
26th September 2015
@ 10.00am

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 Telephone: 01295 756284

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MEET THE HEAD



WILL LOCKETT ABBERLEY HALL

How long have you been at Abberley Hall? Since September 2014

What attracted you to it?

I was at school here myself from the age of 11 to 13 and I loved my time at Abberley Hall. So, when I heard that the head's position was coming up it caught my attention. It was a chance in a lifetime and I'm glad to say that we've not been disappointed. I feel extremely lucky to have joined the school. The ethos that I remembered from my school days has not essentially changed.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

Children who are happy at school, fantastic staff who are proud of and loyal to the school, superb grounds and a culture that makes the most of them. We also have a French chalet that our Year 5 and 7 pupils go and stay in for 2-3 weeks, this enhances and reflects a broad-mindedness in our pupils who can see that there is a bigger world. This spills over into an

excellent level of attainment in languages.

Tell me something about your pupils

We are a co-educational school for 2-13 year olds - split into a Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep School. Abberley Hall is a full boarding and day school.

What are the fees?

Prep School: Full Boarder £7,255 per term, Day Pupil £5,780 per term
Pre-Prep & Nursery: Nursery Full Day £2,395, Pre-Prep £2,715 Average Termly Fee

Famous alumni? James Landale, Deputy Political Editor, BBC News

What does the future hold?

I still feel I can ask, 'why are we doing it this way?' I look forward to taking on board the ideas and suggestions from staff in order to keep Abberley Hall thriving into the future. We have our Centenary year from September 2016-2017 so this will certainly be an exciting time for Abberley Hall.

Abberley Hall School, Worcestershire, WR6 6DD

Tel: 012499 896275

www.abberleyhall.co.uk



JAMES WOMERSLEY BEADESERT PARK SCHOOL

How long have you been at Beadesert? 18 years.

What attracted you to it?

Beadesert was, and still is, a happy, nurturing school where children receive a very good all-round education - and all in beautiful surroundings.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

The education we offer is truly broad. The children are able to succeed academically, helped by skilled, enthusiastic teaching staff. They also have the time and opportunity to excel in the arts and sport as well as in an exciting range of extra activities ranging from creative ICT to tap dancing. Importantly, we are independent of any senior school. Instead we work with the children and their parents to choose the right senior school for them. This year our leavers went to 19 different highly regarded senior schools.

Tell me something about your pupils

We have 430 children here (split roughly 50:50 boys to

girls), aged 3-13 and all living within a 25m radius.

People often comment on how comfortable the children are in any social situation. We put this in part down to confidence, helped by the number of school performances we stage here.

What are the fees? From £2,710 per term.

Famous alumni?

Lady Natasha Rufus Isaacs (co-founder of Beulah London), Nick Abendenon (plays rugby for Clermont Auvergne in France), Dan Robinson (Olympic runner) and sports commentator Alastair Eykyn.

What does the future hold?

Our biggest news is that our fantastic new £3m performing arts centre is complete and will be fully operational this Autumn. The performing arts are an important and popular part of school life here, and the new building will provide us with outstandingly good music, drama and performance facilities.

Beadesert Park School, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire GL6 9AF

Tel: 01453 832072

www.beadesert.gloucs.sch.uk



PAUL SANDERSON BLOXHAM SCHOOL

How long have you been at Bloxham School?

Two years

What attracted you to it?

Fantastic facilities on a beautiful Hornton-stone campus.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

Bloxham is an incredibly happy community. As a small school, every student is known and treated according to their needs, while small classes ensure each one reaches their potential. We are ambitious and punch above our weight: our boys' 1st XV Rugby Squad battled through to the latter stages of the NatWest Schools Cup; our girls' 1st XI Hockey Team are County Champions; and our Equestrian Team hold a number of coveted, NSEA trophies. Our Drama Department is thriving and our Chapel Choir recently completed an international tour to Belgium.

Tell me something about your pupils

Co-educational, 11 to 18 years. Our students are

taught to be tenacious, hard-working team-players who believe in giving-back to their community.

What are the fees?

Senior Boarding fee £10,605 a term
Senior Day fee £8,050 £8,050 a term
Lower School weekly Boarding fee £7,520 a term
Lower School Day fee £5,795 a term
Occasional Boarding fee £46 a night

What does the future hold?

We plan to build on our improving academic success. This year three of our students received offers from Cambridge University, while many others went on to study at Russell Group institutions.

Bloxham, Oxfordshire, OX15 4PE

Tel: 01295 720222

www.bloxhamschool.com

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Age 3-18



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MEET THE HEAD



MRS K HAIG BURFORD SCHOOL

How long have you been at Burford School?

Since 1988 and previously as a student.

What attracted you to it?

I enjoyed being a student here and value Burford's long and successful history of educating young people since 1571. With around 100 boarders, the school has a unique flavour and delivers a stimulating, positive and diverse curriculum.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

As an Academy we deliver a high standard of education, prioritizing areas we feel are important to our students' success and wellbeing. Here we teach students how to think, not what to think, in an environment that helps them develop insight, judgement and character.

Tell me something about your pupils

Students range in age from 11-18. They come from a variety of backgrounds and increasingly we are attracting pupils from beyond our catchment area.

Our boarders are a mix of British and overseas students. Those who come to Burford are ambitious to do very well and encouraged and motivated by the success of their peers.

What are the fees?

Day pupils - £0 Boarding £3,000 per term.

Famous alumni?

Robbie Mustoe - Professional footballer for Middlesbrough, Michael Bownan - Director Green Flag, Glenn Torpy - Air Chief Marshall of RAF, Henry Purdy - Gloucester RFC, Alice Freeman - Olympian Women's Rowing Eight 2008 - Beijing

What does the future hold?

In the short time we intend to build on our position as one of the top 90 schools in England as acknowledged by the Minister of State for Schools this year. Long term aims we plan to build on last year's launch of the Burford Institute of Music and raise funds to build a Concert Hall on our site.

Cheltenham Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PL

Tel: 01993 823303

www.burford.oxon.sch.uk



PADDY MOSS DEAN CLOSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

How long have you been at Dean Close Preparatory School?

I've just arrived! I became the new Headmaster in September 2015.

What attracted you to it?

The values. When I visited I was struck by how busy it was, with each and every child getting stuck in, finding out a lot about themselves. Everyone is helped to succeed; not only what they can do, but subjects and activities they had no idea they were good at. Underpinned by a strong Christian ethos, I found the children to be extremely kind and courteous.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

The level of pastoral care is outstanding - every child is known, valued and cared about. A wide range of abilities are catered for and there is a wealth of

opportunity to participate. A strong family environment makes for a fabulous community, where everyone knows and supports each other in their endeavours.

Tell me something about your pupils

First impressions are they are lively, enthusiastic and friendly - striving to do their best at what they enjoy and willing to try new things.

What are the fees?

From £3495 - £7770 a term.

What does the future hold?

DCPS has never been so full, so I am greatly looking forward to knowing each of the 290 children and watching them learn, grow and achieve.

Lansdown Road, Cheltenham, Glos, GL51 6QS

Tel: 01242 512217

www.deanclose.org.uk



MR PAUL EASTERBROOK HATHEROP CASTLE SCHOOL

How long have you been at Hatherop Castle School?

Twenty four years

What attracted you to it?

I was impressed on interview by the architecture of the building. However, I believe schools are made up of people so didn't accept the job until I returned and met the staff and pupils. The staff were very welcoming and pleased to think we were moving in the right direction by appointing a separate Head for the Prep part of the school (the school was then a Senior girls school). The children were delightful; very warm and fun loving with a real sense of purpose. They were excited and keen to tell me all about the school and why they wanted me to come. I was amazed at the lack of syllabuses and structure so felt this was going to be a real challenge coupled with the fact that there was an ambition there for the school to grow in numbers. I was at the stage in my career

where I was ready for challenges of this type.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

The very high levels of pastoral care. The fact that every child is given a sense of worth and has pride in themselves and the school. The breadth of the curriculum combined with the depth required for academic success. The staff who are very committed and supportive of the aims of the school and the education of the children. Our grounds and environment are a great strength. The opportunities given to the pupils for success are immense and far-reaching.

What are the fees?

£2,045- £4,495 termly for day pupils Reception to P8, £5,975-£6,795 boarding P3- P8

Famous alumni? Selina Blow (fashion designer), Ashleigh Cheadle (actor)

Hatherop, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 3NB

Tel: 01285 750206

www.hatheropcastle.co.uk

From Prep to Senior to Sixth Form



KEY DATES FOR 2015:

3rd October

Prep School Open Morning &
Senior School Open Afternoon

7th November

Entrance Exam for Year 7 (Sept 2016)

19th November

Sixth Form Open Evening

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or Wendy Robertson (Preparatory) on **01453 820471**.

Whole School Open Morning – Saturday 10th October
2015 Senior School 9.00am-12.00pm
Prep School 10.00am-12.00pm

Pictured: Former pupil Kyran Young, currently walking 2,663 miles,
raising awareness for The Gorilla Organisation

wycliffe.co.uk



Founded 1882

MEET THE HEAD



MR ALISTAIR MACNAUGHTON THE KING'S SCHOOL, GLOUCESTER

How long have you been at King's?
8 years

What attracted you to it?

Its strong sense of community, the warmth of the welcome it gives to all newcomers (including new Heads!), the beauty of the site, its outstanding pastoral care and its emphasis on individual creativity.

What do you consider the strengths of the School to be?

A premier league academic education with exceptional extra-curricular opportunities. Another key strength is a staff with a vocational approach - they truly care about every individual who passes through.

Tell me something about your pupils
They really enjoy each other's company; they are

confident (but without arrogance) and they leave excited by the challenges ahead.

What are the fees?

The School fees range from £2,135 to £5,895 per term.

Famous alumni?

They are all famous to us!

What does the future hold?

As we reach the 475th anniversary of our founding in 1541, I'd be happy to have another 475 years of success and further progress. More immediately, though, we are about to embark on further capital development in support of the performing arts. Imminent curricular change is also a challenge, though we think we are firmly on track.

The King's School, Pitt Street, Gloucester, GL1 2BG

Tel: 01452 337337

www.thekingsschool.co.uk



MRS. SUSAN MCLEAN KITEBROOK HOUSE

How long have you been at Kitebrook House?
This is my third year at Kitebrook House.

What attracted you to it?

As a dedicated educator Kitebrook House appealed greatly to my interests, from the magnificent grounds and building to the preserved dignity of standards in true childhood, I was very impressed.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

Continuation of high academics keeps our pupils excelling and ensures placement in top secondary schools. Our distinctive curriculum is achieved by dedicated teachers and diversified activities.

Tell me something about your pupils

Kitebrook pupils experience the true natural aspects of childhood within the scope of growing and learning in a co-educational setting comprised of children from ages 3 to 13.

What are the fees?

Tuition, starting from £3,250 per term for day pupils, is

in close proximity to other comparable schools and commensurate with the utmost level of education and facilities.

Famous alumni?

Listing our cadre of former pupils who have achieved notoriety and outstanding achievements would fill a book. It is wonderful to recognise talent emanating from our school now that will be notable in years to come. To name just a few of our honorable alumni:

What does the future hold?

We have gained positive momentum and proudly maintained academic progress during the past two years. We will continue to provide the necessary and newest incentives, lessons and tools to ensure pupils' outstanding results. We anticipate continued status as one of the most prominent schools in the Cotswolds, inwardly welcoming and outwardly reflecting the serenity of the resplendent countryside.

Kitebrook House, Kitebrook, Nr. Moreton in Marsh, GL56 0RP

Tel: 01608 674350

www.kitebrookhouse.com



DR TIM HANDS MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL

How long have you been at Magdalen College School?
8 years

What attracted you to it?

The history of Magdalen College School is as distinguished as its scholastic reputation. For centuries it has been renowned for original and exceptional academic endeavour and is one of the country's leading schools. Based in the centre of Oxford and within the heart of the University, MCS has all the benefits of being an independent day school on an historical campus with the use of its outstanding facilities.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

MCS is a friendly, inclusive and highly distinctive school, small enough to develop every young person's

character and talents, yet large enough to provide a wide range of subjects and activities. We encourage a respect for learning whilst developing in every pupil a close interest in a broad number of extra-curricular interests. MCS offers outstanding levels of pastoral care with the focus always on the individual.

Tell me something about your pupils

Boys aged 7-18 and Sixth Form girls

What are the fees?

£5,425 per term

Famous alumni?

Noel Chavasse, St Thomas More, Sam Mendes, Jim Rosenthal

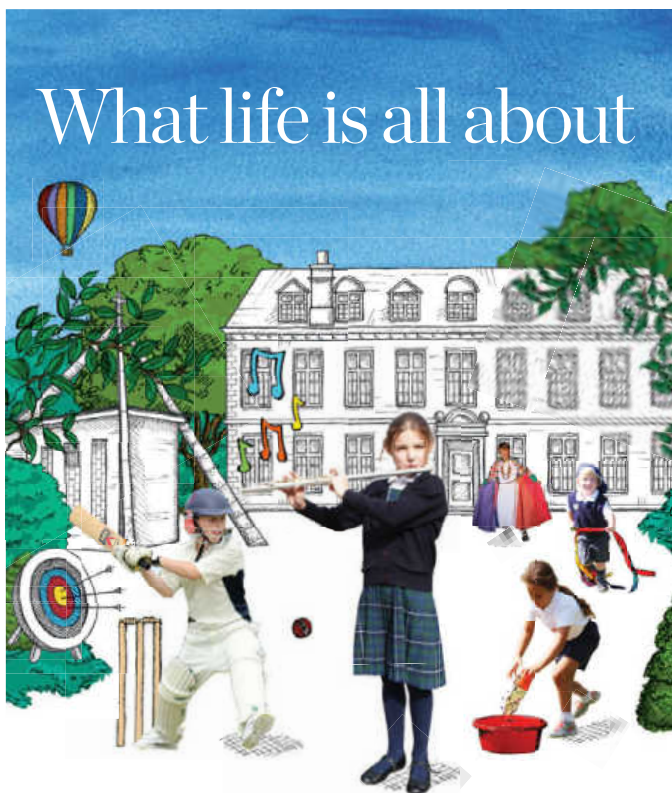
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www.bloxhamschool.com



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MEET THE HEAD



PATRICIA WOODHOUSE MALVERN ST JAMES GIRLS' SCHOOL

How long have you been at Malvern St James Girls' School?

5 years

What attracted you to it?

MSJ flies the flag for excellent all-girls Boarding education. Since 2010 I have particularly driven the concept of aspiration and opportunity in all aspects of School life for each and every girl.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

MSJ gives each girl the opportunity to explore and discover her strengths in a myriad of academic subjects, enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular activities. Our Boarding provision and pastoral care are outstanding.

Tell me something about your pupils

LWe have 450+ girls aged 4-18. Over half of the girls enjoy Boarding, as full, weekly or flexi-Boarders. Our School Community is genuinely an extended family;

each girl is celebrated for herself, she will develop vital leadership skills and grow into a great role-model, equipped for the world beyond Malvern St James.

What are the fees?

Day girls (termly) from £2,660; full boarding from £6,660; weekly boarding from £5,995; and Flexi Boarding from £3,935.

Famous alumnae?

Sara Murray, founder of confused.com; Phyllida Lloyd, Director of musical 'Mamma Mia'; Dr Caroline Lucas MP, Leader of the Green Party.

What does the future hold?

We are looking forward to launching a completely refurbished lower ground floor, featuring a brand new Dining Hall and Kitchens, Leiths cookery and new common rooms. Next July will see the launch of our new Sixth Form Bursary Programme.

15 Avenue Road, Great Malvern, Worcs WR14 3BA
Address Line 2

Tel: 01684 892288

www.malvernstjames.co.uk



MR MARK PEARCE PRIOR PARK PREP SCHOOL

How long have you been at Prior Park Prep School?

It will be five years in January.

What attracted you to it?

Its wonderful location on the edge of the Cotswolds, its superb facilities and above all the outlook of the pupils. Before applying for the post of Head I visited Prior and enjoyed a most engaging tour with some Year 8 pupils. They came across extremely well, as balanced, composed and articulate young people demonstrating a sense of modesty yet inner confidence.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

The ethos of the school is key and evident in all the children do. Whether they achieve Academic excellence or success in Sport or the Arts, the attitude of striving to achieve excellence and be your best self permeates throughout. Children have achieved success at local, county, regional and national levels

but above all, the pastoral care supports our pupils in a way that allows them to grow in self-confidence and contribute in a positive way to the world around them.

Tell me something about your pupils

We are a co-educational, Catholic/Christian school welcoming and respecting all faiths, for children aged rising 3 - 13 years.

What are the fees?

Day Pupils: From £7650 - £14655 per annum
Boarders (Aged 7+): Weekly from £16140 - £19170 per annum, Full from £18660 - £21690 per annum

Famous alumni? Tony Bury, Sir Cameron Mackintosh

What does the future hold?

We continue to invest in Technology and are in the process of introducing personal tablets to aid our pupil's learning. Our weekly boarding continues to grow as more pupils enjoy the 'value added' offered by Prior Park. Our group of schools (Prior Park Schools) is soon to increase from 3 to 4 with the opening of Prior Park Gibraltar in September 2016.

Manor House, Calcott Street, Cricklade SN6 6BB

Tel: 01793 750275

www.priorparkschools.com



MR ROB JONES RENDCOMB COLLEGE

How long have you been at Rendcomb?

I have just started in September 2015!

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

When Noel Wills founded Rendcomb College, his pioneering ideas of a broad based education where pupils were both challenged and supported ensured that Rendcomb pupils were given the best possible start in life. His vision remains as relevant today as it ever was and his forward thinking approach is something that we hope to instil in every pupil at the College.

Tell me something about your pupils

3-18, co-ed, close relationship between day and boarding pupils, warm family environment

What are the fees?

Junior - from £2280 per term

Senior - day from £5200 per term and boarding £7480 per term

Famous alumni?

Richard Dunwoody, National Hunt racing jockey
David Mabberley, internationally renowned Botanist
David Vaisey CBE, historian and archivist, formerly head of Bodleian Library
Nicholas Wapshott, journalist and writer

What does the future hold?

Our exciting new Sport and Performing Arts developments at the School will ensure that we continue to maintain our excellent educational and co-curricular provision.

Rendcomb College, Near Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 7HA

Tel: 01285 831213

www.rendcombcollege.org.uk



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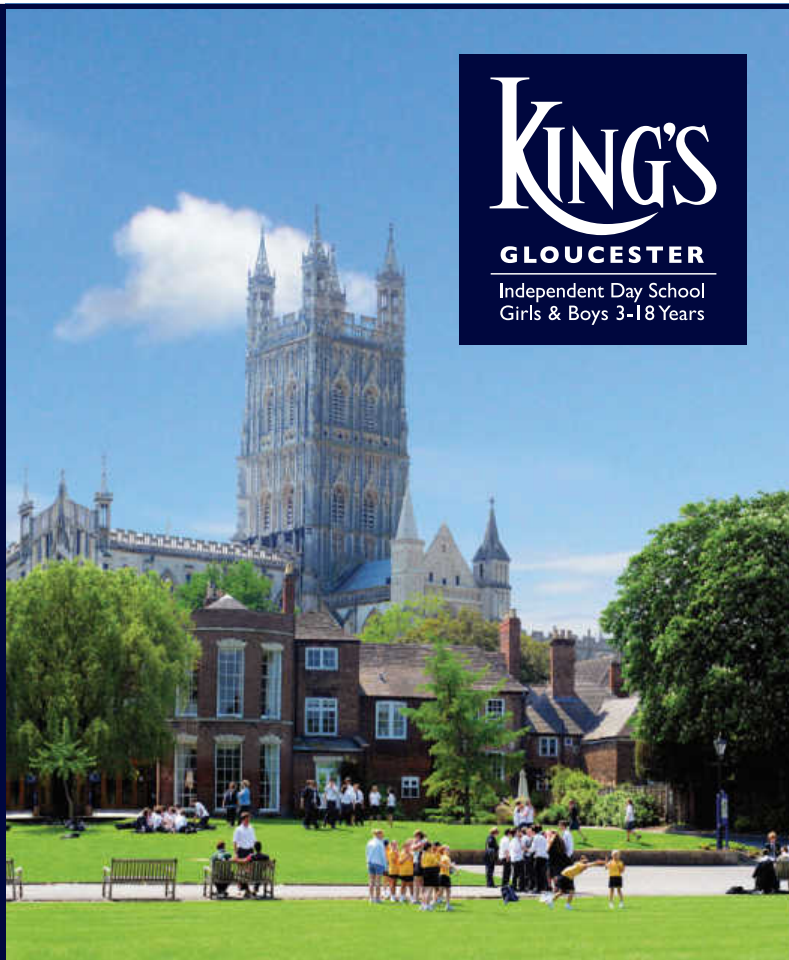
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Independent Day School
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MEET THE HEAD



MR ROBERT A MACDONALD THE RICHARD PATE SCHOOL

How long have you been at The Richard Pate School? I am extremely proud to be entering my tenth year as Headmaster of the Richard Pate School.

What attracted you to it? I was always impressed by the excellent reputation of the school but for me it was the wonderful children the school prepared for their next destinations. They were often very clever but also confident, self-assured and enthusiastic about their learning.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be? The school has an excellent academic record of which we are very proud but it also opens so many doors in the children's learning experience. They have excellent facilities and highly qualified and dedicated staff for all their subjects. Most importantly we put a very high emphasis on their personal development and value the people they become.

Tell me something about your pupils The children range in age from 3 to 11 years and are very evenly

split between boys and girls. They have gone on to over 30 different senior schools in the last 10 years with 52% moving on to selective grammar schools and a number earning scholarships to independent schools as well.

What are the fees? Our fees range from £1030 to £3220 per term from Nursery to Year 6.

Famous alumni? We are proud to acknowledge former pupils who include Olympic Gold Medal rower Alex Gregory, international rugby star Simon Danielli, professional jazz musician Ben Powell, long distance runner Emily Pigeon and BAFTA award winning writer, Jon Foster.

What does the future hold? We are very excited to be opening our new wing to the school site which includes an impressive library extension, all new reception areas and a communal gathering area known as The Street.

Southern Road, Cheltenham, GL53 9RP

Tel: 01242 522086

www.richardpate.co.uk



MRS PAT CLAYFIELD ST EDWARD'S SCHOOL

How long have you been at St Edward's School? This September will be the start of my third year here.

What attracted you to it?

St Edward's has a quiet confidence, a generosity of spirit and welcoming and caring staff.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

Small class sizes, teachers who have a passion for their subjects and who are totally committed to achieving excellent results for their students. An environment where working hard is 'just what we all do' in lessons that are calm, purposeful and rewarding.

Tell me something about your pupils

Parents always comment on how polite, respectful and articulate our pupils are. They are also intellectually curious, intelligent, well rounded and appreciative of others. They are a joy to be with.

What are the fees?

£4,225 - £5,145 per term

Famous alumni?

We are a very young School, so give us time! Ashleigh Ball, England Hockey Player, Hayley Palmer, New Zealand Olympic Swimmer, Clare Stroud, Journalist, Nell Hudson, Actor, Josh O'Connor, Actor and James Campbell, Scottish Javelin Commonwealth Games.

What does the future hold?

With the new Senior Management Team in place, we're in the process of creating new ways to ensure the best Academic and Pastoral provision for current pupils. Additionally, we've been updating our digital services for both Alumni and Parents.

Cirencester Road, Cheltenham, Glos. GL53 8EY

Tel: 01242 538600

www.stedwards.co.uk



MR PAUL BERRY THE KINGSLEY PREPARATORY SCHOOL

How long have you been at The Kingsley Preparatory School?

I take the helm officially in September and can't wait to immerse myself in life at Kingsley.

What attracted you to it?

I love the blend of the traditional and innovative approaches offered at Kingsley. The friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the school cannot fail to entice you in.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

The caring and holistic way pupils are educated and the academic standards and results are nothing short of fantastic.

Tell me something about your pupils

We take girls from 3 years old and most stay at

Kingsley until they are 18. Boys are welcome in Prep from 3 to 7 yrs old. The smiles on their faces says it all.

What are the fees?

Prep fees range from £1,285 to 3,760 a term.

Famous alumni?

Two current Prep teachers are former Kingsley girls.

What does the future hold?

We'll be looking to make sure that Prep pupils have the best possible education and that every day is filled with fun, learning and adventure.

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www.thekingsleyschool.com



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WWW.RENDCOMBCOLLEGE.ORG.UK

MEET THE HEAD



MISS WENDY GRIFFITHS TUDOR HALL

How long have you been at Tudor Hall?

Since 2004

What attracted you to it?

When I first arrived at Tudor my first impression was of wonderful girls, an idyllic location and a school with a fantastic ethos that I was really keen to become a part of.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

Tudor has a unique atmosphere; the girls are genuinely caring and supportive of each other. They are happy and enjoy the wide range of things that are available. At Tudor each girl is treated as an individual and we seek to develop every aspect of her personality - academic, sporting, creative, spiritual. As a boarding school we encourage and develop co-operation and social skills and the sense of responsibility to a wider community as featured in the school motto - Habeo ut Dem, 'I have that I may give'. Academic results are excellent, sporting standards high, extra-curricular

activities wide-ranging and constantly evolving.

Tell me something about your pupils

Girls aged 11 to 18.

What are the fees?

£10,370 per term for boarders; £6,615 per term for day pupils.

What does the future hold?

We are currently in the middle of a three phase building programme. A drama studio has recently been completed and the girls are already excelling in this new stimulating and creative environment. The next two phases include a teaching block and sports complex. The large teaching block will house classrooms for maths, English as well as specialist teaching rooms for Ceramics, Photography, Textiles and Home Economics. The large sports complex will add to existing facilities and includes a dance studio, gymnastic space, fitness suite and cafe.

Wykham Park, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9UR

Tel: 01295 756200

www.tudorhallschool.com



NATASHA DANGERFIELD WESTONBIRT SCHOOL

How long have you been at Westonbirt School?

I joined in January 2012

What attracted you to it? The attraction of joining Westonbirt was the country setting, the combination of the schools and commercial arm housed in a fabulous Victorian mansion with links to the arboretum along with the family atmosphere and excellent Prep school for my own children.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

The strengths of Westonbirt are its close community, small classes and expert teaching in an environment where academic success is as important and the other aspects of a child's development. Pupils reach their potential by being in a supportive atmosphere where individuals strengths are built upon whether that be in sport, drama or another discipline.

Tell me something about your pupils The Prep school is co-ed for pupils aged 3-11yrs and the senior school is all girls from the ages of 11-18yrs. The senior school is 2/3rds boarding which is unusual in today's

schools and we are very proud of our strong boarding ethos. Our pupils are currently 2/3rds British and 1/3rds International and all our pupils mix very well together socially and are very well integrated.

What are the fees? Westonbirt has taken the bold move to freeze fees this Sept 15. Our senior fees for this coming academic year are -

Years 7-8: Day Girls £5,765 per term; £17,295 per annum, Boarders £8,605; £25,815 per annum

Years 9-11: Day Girls £6,675 per term; £20,025 per annum, Boarders UK & EEA £9,850; £29,550 per annum, Boarders International £10,500; £31,500 per annum

Sixth Form: Day Girls £7,100 per term; £21,300 per annum, Boarders UK & EEA £10,500; £31,500 per annum

Boarders International £10,995; £32,985 per annum

Westonbirt School, Tetbury,
Gloucestershire, GL8 8QG

Tel: 01666 880333

www.westonbirt.org



NICK GREGORY WYCLIFFE COLLEGE

How long have you been at Wycliffe College?

I started this month (September).

What attracted you to it?

Modern education must be an excellent preparation for life - professional, personal, social, moral and I believe that Wycliffe produces people who are ready to face up to life after school and deal with its challenges.

What do you consider the strengths of the school to be?

At Wycliffe, people really do matter. It is a place where differences and individual qualities are genuinely valued and respected and everyone embraces the concept of helping every single boy or girl be the best that he or she can individually be. These are all things in which I believe profoundly.

Tell me something about your pupils

Wycliffe is a thriving day and boarding school for boys and girls aged from 2 to 18, set within the heart of the Cotswolds.

What are the fees?

We have a variety of payment schemes available to help parents when planning for future school fee commitments.

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www.shrewsbury.org.uk

We are what we repeatedly do.
 Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.
 Aristotle

Shrewsbury is a unique school in many ways. We are committed to strong academic standards and we believe in a vision of holistic education, as demonstrated through an incredible range of different activities and societies. We are passionate about boarding not just being for convenience, but in providing the best opportunity for young men and women to develop real confidence and belief in themselves. We are fortunate to have one of the best locations of any school in the country, a most beautiful site on the edge of one of the most historic county towns in England.

We believe our traditional values and time-honoured reputation will be enhanced in the future by a dynamic development plan to fully embrace the advantages of co-education. We are committed to providing an environment where young men and women can learn together on foundations of trust and mutual respect.

You will find at Shrewsbury a community which is aiming for the stars in every respect and our strong academic standards are supported by a broad range of Scholarships. Our Scholars will

take the lead in our academic and extra curricular activities. We believe in providing a scholarship programme that both encourages and rewards attitudes to learning that will inspire others.

At Shrewsbury we offer a broad range of Scholarships recognising academic excellence, sporting prowess, all round ability of a high level, musical talent, artistic skill (art and design technology) and dramatic creativity. These are offered to candidates entering at 13+ and 16+ who demonstrate outstanding potential in the relevant examinations. Scholarships may be supplemented by means-tested bursaries, with a limited number of fully funded places where there is proven financial need.

Our school is an exciting place to be.

We believe in equality, offering the same wonderful opportunities to both boys and girls for a fairer future; we believe in aspiring for excellence and doing our best; and we believe in ambition, which is why you will find Shrewsbury School, as a community, and Salopians, as individuals, reaching for the stars.



SATURDAY OPEN DAYS

19th September 2015 (16+ entry)
 7th November 2015 (13+ & 14+ entry)

Scholarship Assessments dates (for Third Form entry in 2016)

Sport/All Rounder: 4th & 5th Oct 2015
 Music: 26th & 27th January 2016
 Art, Drama and DT: 29th Feb 2016
 Academic: 3rd - 5th May 2016

To book a place on one of our Open Days or for further details of our Scholarships, please contact the Admissions Office on +44 (0)1743 280552 or email: admissions@shrewsbury.org.uk

www.shrewsbury.org.uk

Shipton Moyne Opera

Taking the baton from the village of Minety, Shipton Moyne presented *The Marriage of Figaro* over two nights in the beautiful surroundings of Street Farm. The professional company Opera A La Carte entertained 400 guests over two nights on June 12 and 13. In the interval guests sipped champagne and mingled between picnic marquees and table service suppers served in the barn. The opera was hosted by kind permission of Mr and Mrs James Birdwood, and the organising committee was made up of local opera buffs, led by Christopher Rose. Such was the success of Shipton Moyne's first opera that plans are in place to present *La Boheme* on June 17 and 18, 2016.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: HENRY ARDEN,
WWW.HENRYARDEN.COM



Claire Wild (Susanna) and Joseph Doody (Basilio)



Garry and The Revd Poppy Hughes



Chantelle Fabres and Claudio Fantoni



Julie Palmer, Joseph Nagle, Michael and Clare O'Keeffe



Lady Brinkman and Michael Benson



Paul Lewis and Julia Palmer



Philipa Birdwood with Mr and Mrs James Birdwood, and Hugo Birdwood



Lucy Milne and Kat Comaish



Fiona Walsh, Ludovic Lindsey and Kitty Arden



Isla and Jonny Sandersman



Sarah Jennings with Viscount & Viscountess Leckie

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Don't forget the tent

With two children under five and all the stresses and paraphernalia that entails, brave Toby Aiken embarks on a camping holiday in the Forest of Dean...

WORDS AND PICTURES BY TOBY AIKEN

My wife decided we needed to try a camping holiday with the kids. My son will be five this year, and my daughter just turned one. Already this sounds like a bad idea... one child who won't pay attention or do what he's told most of the time, and one who just learnt to walk and wants to practice all the time... everywhere... continually.

I relented as I didn't do much camping when I was a boy, and it's an experience I want to make sure my kids had. I have now changed that opinion... I want my kids to have that experience when they are both older... much older!

However, there is a silver lining to the trip (apart from the friends we went with who were great)... The silver lining in this case was the car I had for the long weekend. This was by far the best thing of the break and it continually put a smile on my face.

I had arranged to test an estate from the corporate team at Cotswold BMW, and to be honest I was expecting an entry level model or maybe a level or two up. I was therefore pleased to be presented with an M Sport model - very pleased! My only initial concern was the automatic gearbox. It's been a while since I drove an automatic and my memory of them is poor - the gearbox deciding when to change up and down, the pre-determined revs at each gear change defining your driving style and the less-than-smooth manner of the change.

All I can say is that I was wrong. The BMW eight-speed automatic box was seamless, reactive and seemed almost intuitive. The gear change was always pretty much exactly where I wanted it to be, smooth with the eight gears and the kickdown when you need to overtake was great. It gives an instant jolt to the lower back in the body-hugging sports seat to tell you the power was there and was being used - and with the next gear change only coming in at a little over 4,000 RPM... it felt good, it sounded good and again, every



BMW 320d M Sport xDrive Sport Tourer

time put a smile on my face. If, and I think this was an incredibly rare occurrence, I wanted a little more control over the gears, a quick leftward tap and the stick acts as a sequential shift, or you can use the paddle selectors on the wheel. But really this isn't needed... the electronic mind of the car has been well programmed to answer the needs of the driver.

So the gearbox works, what about the engine? Smooth, powerful, without the usual tell-tale 'feel' of a diesel - it really did act like a petrol engine in its delivery of the power and the way it responded to the throttle. The ride? Considering those low profile 19-inch tyres, very good... even fully laden with a family of four and all the accoutrements of a camping weekend, it felt good. The seats were supportive in the bends, the car was stable and handled the bumps of the roads in the Forest of Dean without any drama.

So it drives well, it felt good, it sounded good and the switchgear, including that for the navigation and media system was very good. Without instruction I quickly found my way around the system, without any confusion and the navigation system was clear and effective, allowing active zooming when coming to junctions to be sure of your route.

The adjustments of the driver's seat allowed my friend to sit comfortably behind the wheel without issue - and he's

6'4 - while still leaving adequate leg room in the back for an adult. Storage space was great - good door pockets in the front, a centre console storage cubby as well as a decent drinks holder in the rear between the seats, but the real benefit was in the boot. Where the spare wheel would have been was an additional deep storage area - useful for unusually shaped items while not intruding into the generous boot space.

We were worried at one point that we wouldn't fit everything in... tent, inflatable mattresses, cases, travel cot, buggy, stove, food, bottles - camping with a baby means a lot of stuff - but the boot swallowed it all. Interestingly some fellow campers with similar aged kids had brought their Volvo XC60, with a roof box, and still had to take their VW Golf as well to fit everything in, so a definite victory there of German automotive excellence over the Swedish offering!

The car also received the glowing seal of approval from my son, who was very sad that I had to give it back. To sum up, practical, fast, efficient, spacious and so much fun. I was unsure that it would do much more than look good, but I was wrong. Very wrong - and that, in this case, makes me very happy indeed. ■

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1. Prices shown include VAT (at 20%) and exclude VED and First Registration Fee. Metallic paint extra. On The Road prices range from £27,144 to £37,744 and include VED and First Registration Fee. Prices correct at time of going to print. Shogun SG4 LWB model shown with accessory 20" black/silver wheels fitted - available at extra cost. 2. Finance is through Shogun Finance Ltd T/A Finance Mitsubishi 116 Cockfosters Rd, Barnet, EN4 0DY and is subject to status to customers aged 18 and over. Finance Mitsubishi is part of Lloyds Banking Group. Finance options are only applicable in the UK (excludes Northern Ireland, Channel Islands & L.O.M) and may be amended or withdrawn at any time. 3. All new Shogun variants come with a 5 year/62,500 mile warranty (whichever occurs first), for more information please visit www.mitsubishi-cars.co.uk/warranty. Fuel figures shown are official EU test figures, to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

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Waterloo Ball at Westonbirt

Westonbirt School hosted the Waterloo Fundraising Ball, in aid of Friends of St Mary's Church Hawkesbury and The Royal British Legion. Guests enjoyed a champagne reception, followed by a five-course dinner, with entertainment provided by Mavron String Quartet and a Beating Retreat by the Waterloo Band & Bugles of the Rifles (TA), as well as dancing into the early hours accompanied by a live band.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: ANTONY THOMPSON



Gaynor and Ian Bant



Peter and Pauline Setterfield



Esther Willingale with Roger and Maureen Stephens



Karen Whitehouse, Sonia Morris and Amanda Raybone



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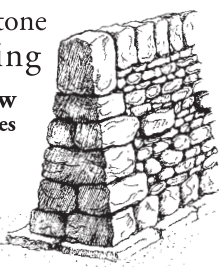
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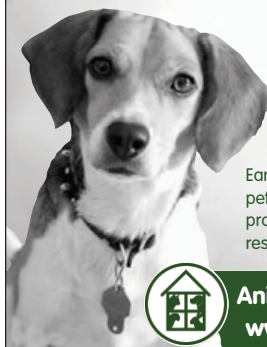


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COTSWOLD LIFE

Cumberland House, Oriel Road, Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire, GL50 1BB
Switchboard: 01242 216050 Fax: 01242 255545
Email: info@cotswoldlife.co.uk
cotswold.greatbritishlife.co.uk

EDITORIAL

Editor

Mike Lowe mike.lowe@archant.co.uk

Deputy editor

Candia McKormack 01242 216064
candia.mckormack@archant.co.uk

Chief writer

Katie Jarvis kt@vale-view.co.uk

Designer

Jamie Elvin jamie.elvin@archant.co.uk

ADVERTISING

Regional sales manager

Karen Cross 01242 216059
karen.cross@archant.co.uk

Regional property manager

Richard Evans 07501 481711
richard.evans@archant.co.uk

Account director

Mary Holtham 01242 216058

Account managers

Julian Hemming 01242 216089

Rosie Henderson 01242 216057

Jo Gauder 01242 216065

Telephone sales executives

Stacey Hawkins 01242 264759

Rachel Davis 01242 264773

Customer services manager

Lorraine Pitcher 01242 216097
lorraine.pitcher@archant.co.uk

CIRCULATION AND MARKETING

Regional Retail Circulation manager

Phil Elcome 01903 703737
phil.elcome@archant.co.uk

Marketing & Promotions Co-ordinator

Katie Tait 01242 265897
katie.tait@archant.co.uk



Publisher

Archant Community Media Ltd

Commercial Director Archant Magazines

Tim Thurston 07793 264611
tim.thurston@archant.co.uk

PA to managing director

Kate Davis 01242 216062
kate.davis@archant.co.uk

Oxfordshire Life

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In which I disappoint God

I fear the fly eggs will hatch inside the dog and come buzzing out of his bottom on some inconveniently elegant occasion

God's set us a few impossible tasks in his time, but this takes the cake: "Let us make man in our image... and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

It was just the same when my daughter wanted a gerbil. She pestered me non-stop for 18 months, but when we got the damn thing, I was the one who had to have dominion over it.

Frankly, this summer has been one long ordeal by livestock. The minute I turn my back, there's some kind of trouble. The flies lay their eggs in the dog's bowl. I suppose fly eggs are fairly innocuous, compared to some of the things he eats when outdoors - the more rotten and stinking the better. But I fear they will hatch inside him and come buzzing out of his bottom on some inconveniently elegant occasion.

I've always deplored the tendency of animals to eat one another, not nicely grilled with herbs and garlic, but on the hoof and screaming. I avert my gaze from the David Attenborough programme when the whale chomps the seal. How I long to be able to save that seal! If I really had dominion over the animals I'd give that whale a rap over the knuckles, and no mistake. But seeing creatures devour one another on TV is a picnic compared to having it happen in your own back yard.

In early summer there's usually a vixen about, and when she takes a hen you know she has hungry cubs waiting back home. And fox cubs are cute. But within a few weeks she'll have reared a group of ruthless



6 It's so hard to get inside an animal's head - except in certain restaurants in France

killing machines - a bit like an ISIS cell. Why can't foxes be vegetarians? Eh, God? If I had dominion over them I'd make those foxes eat plankton. But then I'd probably start feeling sorry for the plankton.

I'm not going to mention hunting. See? I haven't mentioned it. The gamekeeper 'takes care of' the foxes - well, if you want free range eggs, somebody has to keep numbers down. Whilst waiting for the hens to go in and the gamekeeper to appear at dusk, I have been standing guard in the yard. At one stage I thought I might deter the foxes by hanging a radio on the wall, with Radio 4 blaring out: *The Archers* followed by *Front Row*, so the fox would hear voices and keep away. The farmer does take a keen interest in contemporary

culture, of course, but would the fox believe he could be discussing Mike Leigh and Yves St Laurent? It's so hard to get inside an animal's head - except in certain restaurants in France.

And then there was the continuing battle with the mice. I tried peppermint oil and an electronic device which emits a high frequency noise which, it claims, deters rodents. Yet still they frolicked on my hearthrug. I can shout "Get 'im!" to my dog when he's rattling in the barns, but I don't want to witness a murder in my own sitting room, halfway through my bedtime cocoa. So if he glimpses a

mouse I have to shout "Leave!" It must be really confusing. And it's unmistakably Bad Dominion.

Inevitably the mice have had babies. And the baby mice stumble about looking cute. With some species, you can wait till they grow up and stop looking cute, and then you can kill them - sorry, bring in somebody else to deal with them. The trouble with mice is they never stop looking cute. You have to think of them as rats who have shrunk in the hot wash. With a heavy heart, I started to set traps. And then miraculously, they disappeared. Did they somehow know, O Lord? I need clarification here.

It's no help when animals are vegetarians. I swear I can hear my lettuces screaming in the dead of night as the slugs approach. It's no use: I give up. I shall never get into heaven by Having Dominion. Next week: I attempt to Love my Neighbour. I think that might be even more of a challenge. ■

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